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Addresses and Poems

at

The One Hundred and Thirty-second
Anniversary of

The Independence of Rhode Island

and

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary

of

The Rhode Island Citizens
Historical Association

At Providence, Rhode Island

1909 [1908]

Edited by Thomas W. Bicknell, for
The Association

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FOREWORD

On May the fourth, 1906, the Rhode Island Citizens' Historical Association held a public celebration of Rhode Island's Declaration of Independence, declared and proclaimed on the 4th of May, 1776, in the State Capitol at Providence. While the act had been noted by historians, this was the first public celebration ever made of this important event, and the honor of originating a public recognition of it is due to our Association. The introductory address by President Bicknell dealt with the importance of the Act, the details of its adoption, and its value as the culmination of a series of initiative procedures of the colony, which have made Rhode Island history famous. Honorable Charles Warren Lippitt gave an historical address, exhaustive in its character, proving beyond doubt or cavil the claim of the State, that Rhode Island was the first of the American colonies to assert its independence of Great Britain, two months in advance of the Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia, July 4th, 1776. The address of Governor Lippitt, with its accompanying documents, is one of the most valuable contributions to our historical literature and every copy should be sacredly preserved.

The celebration of 1906 met with such favor with the press and people that the Association voted to recognize the day as an annual celebration, and on May fourth, 1907, the celebration was held in the old State Capitol on North Main and Benefit Streets, Providence, in the Hall of Representatives, now the Court Room of the 5th Judicial Court, where the Declaration was presented and adopted in 1776. Addresses were made by President Bicknell, Hon. Theodore F. Green, Governor James H. Higgins and Hon. Roswell B. Burchard, and an original poem was read by Mrs. Harriette

M. Miller. The addresses and poems, making a pamphlet of 36 pages, has been printed and distributed to the members of the Association and the General Assembly.

The present volume gives the addresses and poems at the celebration at the old State Capitol, Providence, on May the fourth, 1908, and also includes the addresses of President Bicknell and William A. Mowry, and the poem of Mrs. Harriette A. Miller at the celebration of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Rhode Island Citizens' Historical Association. The address of Hon. Roswell B. Burchard, given on the fourth of May, has been solicited for publication, but may appear in a separate edition.

In addition to the exercises at the Old Capitol, President Bicknell placed memorial flags at the graves of Hon. Metcalf Bowler, Governor Nicholas Cook, Hon. Stephen Hopkins, Providence, Deputy Governor William Bradford, Hon. Shearjashub Bourne, Bristol, and General Thomas Allin, and Edward Bosworth, Barrington, all members of the General Assembly of 1776.

The following testimonial from the Boston (Mass.) Transcript, a daily newspaper of the first rank in New England, testifies to the interest in our commonwealth:

RHODE ISLAND'S "FOURTH."

"Although in proportion to her size Rhode Island makes as much noise as her sister on the Fourth of July, the 4th of May is the real anniversary of her independence as she views it, and that is the occasion of widespread patriotic observances within her borders, today. It was upon that date in 1776 that, unable to await the more comprehensive declaration that cut us loose, even from the pretence of allegiance to King George, the General Assembly of the little Colony proclaimed that "we are obliged by necessity and it becomes our highest duty to use every means that God and nature have furnished us in support of our inviolable rights and

privileges; to oppose that power which is extended only for our destruction." So it wrote out the King's name and authority in all its decrees and general public transactions, and substituted that of the Colony.

Of course unaided it could not for long have maintained its liberties so boldly declared. Nevertheless, a sentimental and patriotic interest attaches to the event, and it is well to keep it in the memory of the passing generations. The anniversary passed for over a century without special observance. Two years ago some notice began to be taken of it and to-day the commemorative exercises are on a quite elaborate scale. The celebration at Providence will take place in the old State House, where 132 years ago the declaration was made. Flags are floating from public buildings, school houses and the residences of such citizens as have caught the spirit of the occasion. Every city and town that has a battery will make it speak for the glory of the State."

THOMAS WILLIAMS BICKNELL,

PRESIDENT.

The Rhode Island Citizens' Historical Association.

December, 1908.

PROGRAM

A Patriotic Celebration

OF THE

One Hundred and Thirty-Second Anniversary

OF THE

Declaration of Independence

ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

COLONY OF RHODE ISLAND AND
PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

MAY 4th, 1776

Public Celebration Inaugurated by the

The Rhode Island Citizens Historical
Association

1906

EXERCISES

ON MONDAY, MAY 4th, 1908 AT 3 P. M.

At the Old State House on North Main Street

PROVIDENCE R. I.

MISS HELEN LOUISE AMES, Soloist

MISS FLORENCE E. AMES, Accompanist

HON. THOMAS W. BICKNELL,

President of the Rhode Island Citizens Historical Association,
will preside.

1. Singing, The Old Hundredth Psalm, by the Congregation.
2. Prayer, Rev. Thomas F. Doran, Vicar-General Providence Diocese.
3. Vocal Solo, Miss Ames.
4. Address by Thomas W. Bicknell, President of R. I. C. H. A.
5. Singing, "America," by the Congregation.
6. Reading of the Act Declaring Our Independence, by David J. White, Esq., Reading Clerk Senate, R. I.
7. Vocal Solo, Miss Ames.
8. Historical Address, by Hon. Roswell B. Burchard, A. B., LL. B.
9. Original Poem, Mrs. F. Adelia Reynolds, Providence, R. I.
10. Vocal Solo, Recessional, (Kipling), Miss Ames.
11. Singing, "God Save the State."
12. Benediction.

A Declaration of Independence

BY

The Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Enacted by The General Assembly

AT THE OLD STATE HOUSE IN PROVIDENCE, MAY 4, 1776

AN ACT

Repealing an act, entitled "An Act, for the more effectually securing to His Majesty the allegiance of his subjects in this, his Colony and dominion of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations," and altering the forms of Commissions, of all writs and processes in the Courts, and of the oaths prescribed by law.

WHEREAS, in all states, existing by compact, protection and allegiance are reciprocal, the latter being only due in consequence of the former; and,

WHEREAS, George the Third, King of Great Britain, forgetting his dignity, regardless of the compact most solemnly entered into, ratified and confirmed to the inhabitants of this Colony by his illustrious ancestors, and, till of late, fully recognized by him, and entirely departing from the duties and character of a good King, instead of protecting, is endeavoring to destroy the good people of this Colony, and of all the United Colonies, by sending fleets and armies to America to confiscate our property, and spread fire, sword and desolation throughout our country, in order to compel us to submit to the most debasing and detestable tyranny; whereby we are obliged by necessity, and it becomes our highest duty, to use every means with which God and nature have furnished us, in support of our inviolable rights and privileges, to oppose that power which is exerted only for our destruction.

BE it therefore enacted by this General Assembly, and by the authority thereof it is enacted, that an act, entitled "An Act for the more effectually securing to His Majesty the allegiance of his subjects, in this his Colony and dominion of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations," be, and the same is hereby repealed.

AND be it further enacted by this General Assembly, and by the authority thereof, it is enacted, that in all commissions for offices, Civil and Military, and in all writs and processes in law, whether original, judicial or executory, civil or criminal, whereon the name and authority of the said King is made use of, the same shall be omitted, and in the room thereof, the name and authority of the Governor and Company of this Colony shall be substituted in the following words, to wit:

THE GOVERNOR AND COMPANY OF THE ENGLISH COLONY OF
RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS.

That all such commissions, writs and processes shall be otherwise of the same form and terms as they heretofore were; that the Courts of Law be no longer entitled nor considered as the King's Courts; and that no instrument in writing, of any nature or kind, whether public or private, shall in the date thereof, mention the year of the said King's reign.

PROVIDED, nevertheless, that nothing in this act contained shall render void or vitiate any commission, writ, process or instrument heretofore made or executed, on account of the name and authority of the said King being therein inserted.

AUTHOR OF DECLARATION, COL. JONATHAN ARNOLD, PROVIDENCE.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF 1776.

THE HON. NICHOLAS COOKE, *Governor.*

THE HON. WILLIAM BRADFORD, *Deputy Governor.*

ASSISTANTS.

Mr. John Collins,	Maj.-Gen. Simeon Potter,
Mr. Ambrose Page,	Mr. John Sayles, Jr.,
Mr. John Jepson,	Mr. James Arnold,
Mr. Jonathan Randall,	Mr. Peter Phillips,
Mr. William Potter,	Mr. Thomas Church.

DEPUTIES.

Newport.

Mr. John Wanton,	Mr. Gideon Wanton,
Mr. Samuel Fowler,	Mr. Thomas Freebody,
Mr. George Sears,	Col. Joseph Belcher.

Providence.

Col. Jonathan Arnold,	Mr. John Smith,
Mr. John Brown,	Col. Amos Atwell.

Portsmouth.

Mr. Metcalfe Bowler,	Mr. John Coddington,
Mr. John Thurston.	

Warwick.

Mr. William Greene,	Mr. Charles Holden, Jr.,
Mr. Jacob Greene,	Col. John Waterman.

Westerly.

Maj.-Gen. Joshua Babcock,	Col. Joseph Noyes.
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North Kingstown.

Mr. John Northup,	Mr. Sylvester Gardner.
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South Kingstown.

Capt. Samuel Seagar,	Mr. Samuel Babcock.
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East Greenwich.

Mr. Job Comstock,	Mr. Thomas Shippee.
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Jamestown.

Capt. Samuel Carr,	Mr. Benjamin Underwood.
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Smithfield.

Mr. Daniel Mowry, Jr.,	Capt. Andrew Waterman.
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Scituate.

Col. William West,	Mr. Christopher Potter.
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- Mr. Richard Steere, *Glocester.* Col. Chad Brown
 Capt. Joseph Stanton, Jr., *Charlestown.* Mr. Jonathan Hazard.
 Mr. Thomas Tillinghast, *West Greenwich.* Mr. Judiah Aylworth.
 Mr. Ephraim Westcott, *Coventry.* Mr. Jeremiah Fenner.
 Mr. George Pierce, *Exeter.*
 Mr. Nicholas Easton, *Middletown.*
 Mr. Shearjashub Bourne, *Bristol.* Col. Nathaniel Pearce.
 Mr. Gideon Almy, *Tiverton.* Col. John Cooke.
 Capt. Thomas Brownell, *Little Compton.* Mr. Daniel Wilbur.
 Mr. Cromwell Child, *Warren.* Col. Sylvester Child.
 Mr. John Dexter, *Cumberland.* Capt. Elisha Waterman.
 Mr. Samuel Tefft, *Richmond.* Major Richard Bailey.
 Mr. Andrew Harris, *Cranston.* Mr. Zuriel Waterman.
 Mr. John Fenner, *Johnston.* Mr. Peleg Williams.
 Major Thomas Olney, *North Providence.* Mr. Jonathan Jenckes, Jr.,
 Mr. Edward Bosworth, *Barrington* Capt. Thomas Allin.
 Mr. John Larkin, *Hopkinton* Mr. Thomas Wells.
 THE HON. METCALFE BOWLER, *Speaker.*
 JOSIAS LYNDON, *Clerk.*
 MR. HENRY WARD, *Secretary.*
 MR. HENRY MARCHANT, *Attorney-General.*
 MR. JOSEPH CLARKE, *General Treasurer.*

AN ADDRESS

BY

THOMAS W. BICKNELL

President of the Rhode Island Citizens Historical Association

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1776

The best evidence of our nobility is the measure of our appreciation of the deeds of great men in great crises of history, when high ideals draw men to noble self-sacrificing action. To this Touchstone we are invited today to test our patriotism and our love of *Democracy*.

We meet again in this historic hall to commemorate the great event transacted here on the Fourth of May, 1776, and to honor the men of Rhode Island, who were the original actors in the immortal drama of freedom on the American Continent. The City of Philadelphia has its *Independence Hall*, whose very walls enbalm the names and deeds of John Hancock and Samuel Adams, of Massachusetts, of Stephen Hopkins, Samuel Ward and William Ellery, of Rhode Island, of Roger Sherman and Oliver Wolcott of Connecticut, of Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, of Charles Carroll of Carrolton, Maryland, of Thomas Jefferson and Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, of Edward Rutledge of South Carolina, and those other great compatriots who, by their signatures, written on the Fourth of July, 1776, created thirteen independent commonwealths on the eastern slope of the Alleghenies, and pledged "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor" in support of their Declaration. ALL HONOR to the great men, who created a *new nation of independent states* on this Western Continent, and thereby set the standards of liberty, around which the nations of the world, in their new birth into the family of Freedom, shall in time gather and align themselves.

This *Hall of Representatives* in this Old State House is *Rhode Island's Independence Hall*, its Palladium of Civil Liberty.

Here, on Saturday, the Fourth Day of May, 1776—Just two months before the United Declaration of the thirteen Colonies, in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, the Patriots of Rhode Island, by its General Assembly, took the great initiative for independence as they and their fathers had so often done before, in the forward march towards civil liberty. Single handed and alone, the little Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, for one hundred and forty years loyal to the monarchy of Great Britain, clearly, vigorously and solemnly declared that “George the Third, King of Great Britain, forgetting his dignity, regardless of the compact most solemnly entered into, ratified and confirmed to the inhabitants of this Colony by his illustrious ancestors, and till of late, fully recognized by him, and entirely departing from the duties and character of a good King, instead of protecting, is endeavoring to destroy the good people of this Colony, and of all the United Colonies, by sending fleets and armies to America to confiscate our property, and spread fire, sword and desolation throughout our country, in order to compel us to submit to the most debasing and detestable tyranny; whereby we are obliged by necessity, and it becomes our highest duty, to use every means which God and nature have furnished us, in support of our inviolable rights and privileges, to oppose that power which is exerted only for our destruction.”

By this Act, soon to be read in our hearing, Rhode Island stood forth the first free and independent commonwealth on the American Continent: yea more, *the first and foremost in the history of the world*. For two months, *she stood alone* in her declaration of absolute independence from any power save the vested and inalienable rights of sovereignty inherent in the body politic, whose name was not Rhode Island, not the United States, not any local title, but rather that greater word DEMOCRACY, a name yet to be

written on the governmental parchment of every nation under Heaven.

All honor to the grand yeomanry of this little Commonwealth that they wrote that grand word DEMOCRACY *first* and wrote it large to be read across the seas and for all recorded time.

It is my purpose in a brief address to give a glimpse only of the scene and an account of a few of the chief actors in it in this hall, one hundred and thirty-two years ago today. But a setting is needed and the events of a twelve-month constitute it. The Battles of Concord Bridge and Lexington Common were fought April 19, 1775. Rhode Island had raised an *Army of Observation* of fifteen hundred men to serve within or without the Colony. The Governor, Joseph Wanton, the third chief magistrate of that family, had refused to sign the commissions of the officers, had been suspended from official duties, and was subsequently deposed from the high office which he had held for six consecutive years, an act, the parallel of which does not appear in our colonial history. The Kentish Guards, organized in 1774, under the command of Col. James M. Varnum, with the two brothers, Nathaniel Greene and Christopher Greene, illustrious men of an illustrious race, with muskets on shoulders and as privates in the ranks, had marched through Providence on their way to Boston, only to be called back by order of Governor Wanton at the Massachusetts line. The Continental Congress, a Providence idea, was in session in Philadelphia. Samuel Ward, the great patriot, late Governor, and delegate to the Continental Congress, had just been borne to his burial at Philadelphia and William Ellery, of Newport, had been chosen his successor.

The April election had elevated to the chief magistracy that distinguished patriot citizen of Providence, Nicholas Cooke, the great war governor of the colony, and a General Assembly of notable Rhode Island men of some of whom I shall speak.

The Governor, Hon. Nicholas Cooke, was a successful merchant and a distinguished citizen of Providence. He had been a leader in the Northern section of the colony, and had won a solid reputation for sound principles of government, for resistance to the oppressive acts of Great Britain and for heroic courage. He was sixty-nine years old, with manly life and vigor unabated. He accepted the office of Governor at this period of his life, for already his doom seemed fixed by his acceptance of the office *pro tem*, to fill the Wanton vacancy. All men's thoughts and eyes turned to Nicholas Cooke as the man of and for the hour. Stephen Hopkins, then preparing for his memorable journey to Philadelphia, waited on Mr. Cooke, and urging the necessities of the crisis, secured his acceptance of an office, which probably meant death as a traitor to the Crown.

William Bradford, of Bristol, the Lieutenant Governor, a descendant of Governor William Bradford, of Plymouth Colony, and the founder of the distinguished family in Rhode Island, was a patriotic leader in the cause of civil liberty. Bristol was also represented in the Upper House, or Senate by Simeon Potter, who had been elected as Major-General of the Rhode Island troops for the defence of our own and sister colonies.

The Assistants, or Senators, ten in number, met in the Senate Chamber on the floor above. They with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor constituted at that time the Upper House or Senate, with the Governor as the presiding officer.

Of the Assistants, John Collins, of Newport, was an active champion of the cause of American Independence, and was one of a committee sent to General Washington to inform him of the exposed condition of the colony, and to advise as to the best method for its defence. From 1778 to 1782, he was a representative of the State in the Continental Congress, and succeeded Governor William Greene, 2nd, as Governor from 1786 to 1790.

Ambrose Page was a Providence patriot, an active participant in the destruction of the Gaspee, the builder of two row-gallies of war, and always in the van of energetic workers in freedom's cause.

John Sayles, Jr., was a member of the Senate during the years 1774, 1775 and 1776, and in 1775 was the Chairman of a committee to raise five hundred troops for colonial defense.

John Jepson, of Portsmouth, was a member of the House of Deputies during the exciting events of 1772, 1773 and 1774, an assistant in 1775 and 1776 and later Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas for Newport.

Col. James Arnold, of Warwick, had represented his town in both houses of the General Assembly, and held civil and military rank in the colony. He was a true patriot of the Arnold stamp.

The House of Deputies, or Representatives, of sixty-four members, met in this Hall and was presided over by Hon. Metcalf Bowler, of Portsmouth, as its Speaker. Mr. Bowler was an enterprising and wealthy merchant of Newport and was an early advocate of protection to the rights and liberties of the colonies. As a member of this House from Newport for many years, and as a Justice of the Supreme Court of the Colony, Mr. Bowler was a strong and uncompromising enemy to the oppressive acts of the British Crown. He presided over the deliberations of this House from 1767 to August, 1776, when he was elected as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Colony, in recognition of his high character and his valuable services. He died in Providence, in 1789 and a monument marks his grave in the cemetery of St. John's Church, on North Main Street, Providence.

Providence sent four delegates to the House of Deputies, two of whom claim special notice. The first, Col. Jonathan Arnold, lawyer, literateur, doctor, legislator, statesman, Christian patriot, was the author of the State paper, which makes this day worthy of memory. He was a descendant of Thomas Arnold of Providence

(1661-5) and one of the many of that name who have made the Arnold family so noted in our Commonwealth. His character and deeds were so worthily set forth, May 4th, 1907, by Hon. Theodore Francis Green, a lineal descendent, that I need not dwell on them. The Declaration itself is his enduing monument.

John Brown, of Providence, four generations from Chad Brown, a founder of the town, was one of the four brothers to whom Providence owes so much, John, Joseph, Nicholas and Moses. The capture and destruction of the Gaspee in Providence River, in 1772, was one of John Brown's enterprising illustrations of his initiative, his daring, and his patriotism. Had he or his associates been apprehended, transportation and death were certain, he knew too well; but like men at Marathon or Thermopylae, nothing was too costly to be with-held in Freedom's cause. He was forty years old when he advocated and by his powerful influence and following, led the Patriot Assembly to adopt the act of Rhode Island Independence.

In 1775, the army at Boston, was reduced to four rounds of ammunition to a man, when one of Mr. Brown's vessels brought a ton and a half of gun-powder to Providence, which was at once sent overland to Cambridge, to supply the troops.

From 1776 to 1779, Mr. Brown served on twenty-six Committees or Commissions in the Colonial service. Later he threw the weight of his great influence in favor of the adoption of the Constitution. He was elected to Congress in 1784, 1785 and 1789, and served on the commission to erect the Federal buildings at Washington.

Of the Warwick delegation was William Greene, son of Governor William Greene, of that most distinguished Rhode Island family springing from John Greene, surgeon, of Warwick, of 1643. His father had served the colony as Deputy Governor and Governor for thirteen years, embracing some of the most stormy periods in our colonial history. A few years later, the son, now a representa-

tive in the Assembly, was called to serve the State as Governor for eight years (1778 to 1786) during the no less stormy period of the Confederation and the struggle for the Federal Constitution. While William and Jacob Greene were serving in the Councils of State at Providence, their cousins, Nathaniel and Christopher were engaged in the Councils of War with Gen. Washington at Cambridge. The Puritan and Quaker blood of the great family of Greenes was raised to fever heat by the oppressive acts of a tyrannical government, and by voice and vote, by pen and sword, they wrought and fought for Liberty.

The town of Westerly was represented by a stalwart patriot in the person of Hon. Joshua Babcock, who was Major General of the Colonial Militia. Mr. Babcock was born in 1707, graduated from Yale College in 1725, studied medicine in Boston and in England, and practiced as a physician in his native town. It is said that he read the Bible daily in Latin or Greek; was fond of the best literature and held a controlling influence in his section of the State. He was a warm friend of Gov. Samuel Ward, whose home was at Westerly. Benjamin Franklin made his palatial mansion on Rhodes Hill, his home, while in this section, and we are told that he attached the lightning rods on the Babcock house. Dr. Babcock was at one time Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Colony. His devotion to liberty was a passion and he lived to see his native colony a free and independent state, as his vote declared it to be on May 4, 1776.

From the East side of the Bay came another splendid defender of the faith in the person of Shearjashub Bourne of Bristol. Mr. Bourne and his distinguished brother, Benjamin, carried the blood of a noble ancestry in their veins and devoted themselves to the cause of the people in the great struggle for freedom. Mr. Bourne was a member of the Colonial Committee of Safety, was for several years a Justice and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and an earn-

est champion of the colony as against the King. His vote was "*Aye*," in a firm, clear note on the adoption of the Declaration.

The town of Smithfield was represented by a stalwart son of independence and liberty in Judge Daniel Mowry, a man of superior intellectual ability and unusual practical knowledge of men and public affairs. Born in 1729, he was elected to the General Assembly for ten years from 1766 to October, 1776, when he was chosen Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, the duties of which office he discharged with great ability and fidelity. He was one of the foremost men in Northern Rhode Island during the Revolutionary War, before and after. In 1780 and 1781, Judge Mowry was elected to Congress with Gen. Varnum, Gov. Collins and Ezekiel Cornell. He was a vigorous man, a clear and forcible speaker, and his great earnestness and sincerity enabled him to wield a powerful influence over his hearers. His voice and vote were for Independence with an emphasis in keeping with the positive Mowry character.

Gladly would I make record of the whole of this assemblage of patriotic Rhode Islanders, but time forbids. Read the list and note the names of old Rhode Island families whose ancestors came with Coddington, Williams, Clarke, Holden, Gorton and Arnold,—Waterman, Harris, Jenckes, Steere, Potter, Wilbur, Child, Dexter, Manton, Randall, Tillinghast, Hazard, Fenner and the rest,—names which History will preserve and around which the halo of brilliant action will shine forth with increasing lustre with the growing years.

Loyalty to my native town compels a reference to the two noble citizens, Edward Bosworth and Capt. Thomas Allin, of Barrington. Capt. Allin was one of the first to march to Boston and Cambridge in the defence of Boston, gave himself to the colonial service for the whole of the Revolutionary War, and at its close bore the rank of Brigadier General in the state militia. Later his vote untied the tie for and against the Federal Constitution, and his

vote with that of his colleague Hon. Samuel Allen, gave a majority of two for its adoption by the State of Rhode Island in 1790.

If the day has the significance which we claim, a few plain duties lie before us.

It should be recognized and honored by all the people of the State, by the General Assembly, the successor of that of 1776, and by all exercising authority. All the men who had a part in placing Rhode Island in the front rank of free nations, and who by their voice and vote, placed themselves in the front rank of wise legislators and true patriots, should be recognized and honored by the State.

The towns and cities of Rhode Island should recognize and honor the citizen legislators of their choice, who so honorably and fearlessly recorded the sentiments of their constituents in the making of a free Commonwealth. Decoration Day should honor the men who made the nation, as well as those who fought to preserve it. Flags and flowers, salutes and oratory belong to the men of 1776, as much as to the men of 1861. True patriotism will gather in its embrace all great souls who have helped to make and save the State, whose foundations were broad enough and strong enough on which to erect an *Empire of States, the Great Republic of the West*.

May 4th, 1776

By F. ADELIA REYNOLDS

PRELUDE

Mine eyes have seen a vision of Rhode Island's early day,
Of her noble pioneers in her forest gloom and way,
And the Red Man's cheery welcome on the waters of the bay—
And Hope her anchor strong.

To-day the noisy streamlets which were once the wild-wood rills,
Turn the myriad wondrous spindles of her valleys' busy mills,
And where was once the forest is now city on the hills,
And Hope her anchor firm!

I ask not the muses to aid in the task

Of telling my story to-day—

Far nobler my theme than heroes of myth,

No Helen inspires my chaste lay!

But, come thou, oh, North wind, and come thou, sweet South!

Come, Spirit of East and of West—

Tell thou the story, the wonderful story,

With patriot's love and true zest!

Like prophet of old, in vision so clear,

Clothe thou the dry bones with life!

Let philosophy give the true reason for facts,

And poetry sweetly run rife!

No country in Europe the scene of our tale,

But America's free virgin soil.

Our characters seek not the rich prairie lands,

But in rocky New England they toil.

'Twas once on a time and long years ago,

A band crossed o'er the wide sea;

They were men brave and bold, and women of faith,

Leaving for aye the home tree.

They came to the wilderness for freedom, they said,

For freedom of conscience so rare.
 They were willing to bear all its dangers and toils,
 And all of the burdens to share.
 But, once they were settled in the bright new land,
 How astonished they were to find
 That e'en in their midst dissensions arose—
 That everyone had his own mind!
 So come thou, oh North wind, and come thou, sweet South,
 Come, Spirit of East and of West;
 Tell thou the story, the sad, olden story,
 Of might making right, for the rest!
 Then Roger Williams arose in his might,
 And proclaimed a new truth to the world.
 "Freedom of conscience," he announced, "is our right!
 Soul liberty ever!" he hurled.
 Freedom of conscience between man and his God;
 Prescribed, not by new world or old!
 Soul liberty, not for a band, but each man,
 A treasure as precious as gold.
 So, "might making right" sent its firm fiat forth,
 And Williams soon sought a new home.
 Sick and alone, through forest and wild,
 Trusting e'er in his God did he roam.
 He rested a time on fair Seekonk's bank,
 Hoping there he might quietly stay,
 But a "most loving message" from Winthrop was sent,
 So he started again on his way!
 'Twas then in his bark he crossed the bright stream,
 And saw a small group on the shore,
 "Whatcheer, Netop," the grave chieftain said,
 It echoed the centuries o'er!
 "What cheer," said the Indian, and "what cheer" say we!
 Recall we the story to-day,
 How the swift-flying years, and the centuries gone
 Have passed on the shores of the bay.
 So, come thou, oh, North wind, and come thou, sweet South—
 Come, Spirit of East and of West,

Tell thou the story, the rare thrilling story,
 Of little Rhode Island, the best!
 For, tho' small in size, in her hist'ry she's great!
 Roger Williams and other men true.
 Laid firm the foundation, and led on by Hope
 Left freedom for me and for you!
 At the head of the loveliest bay in the world.
 There gathered, from near and from far,
 Men brave and bold, and women of faith, L
 Still guided by Freedom's bright star.
 Freedom of thought, as of word and of deed,
 Made the name of fair Providence great;
 And years have but added to that fame well deserved,
 And helped to develop our State.
 So the names of these men have been handed down,
 Williams and Arnold and Clark!
 And Blackstone the thinker, on lone Study-hill farm,
 And others who made, each, his mark.
 Through colonial days, as New England waxed great,
 This brave little State led the way,
 When on Hist'ry's page are recorded rare deeds,
 Be sure they were born on this bay!
 To the story of Gaspee we proudly refer;
 Revolution's first combat was there.
 'Twas Providence, too, which first passed an act
 Favoring union 'gainst Britain to bear.
 Boston made tea in her harbor one night;
 Our city burned her's on the square.
 Every man was a patriot, every call he obeyed,
 Wives were glad all their burdens to share.
 Every year, July Fourth, our country goes wild,
 Remembering the year seventy-six;
 When the colonies declared themselves free from King George,
 And beyond the reach of his tricks.
 But how proudly we think of two months before—
 On the fourth of poetic sweet May,
 When little Rhode Island declared herself free,

Antedating the National day.
 So now we are meeting to celebrate here,
 That daring and wonderful act,
 When brave "Little Rhody" again led the way
 With a courage she never has lacked.
 Now come thou, oh North wind, and come thou, sweet South.
 Come, Spirit of East and of West!
 Tell thou the story, the glorious story,
 Obeying descendants' behest.
 'Twas the foundation principle in Rhode Island that led!
 Individual freedom her boast.
 It made her grand hist'ry, for, tho' little, she stands
 'Mong the greatest from east to west coast.
 'Twas the plan of our God, that from North and sweet South,
 From East and from West, they should meet
 On Atlantic's gray shore, heavy trials to bear.
 While hastening true freedom to greet.
 Was it also His plan that in all this great land
 Our little Rhode Island should lead?
 But this we do know—on that day long ago,
 Hist'ry correctly recorded her deed.
 And so, oh thou North wind, and so, thou sweet South,
 So Spirit of East and of West—
 Thou hast told us the story of Rhode Island's glory—
 Her grand future recordeth the rest!

Addresses and Poem
ON
The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary
OF
THE FOUNDING OF
The Rhode Island Citizens
Historical Association

THOMAS W. BICKNELL,
PRESIDENT

March, 1908

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

AN ADDRESS

BY

THOMAS WILLIAMS BICKNELL

PRESIDENT OF

The Rhode Island Citizens' Historical Association

AT THE

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

MARCH, 1908

A good appetite for historic food is evidence of moral and intellectual health. Mental dyspepsia arises from poor nourishment. A man who feeds only on the daily paper will die of neurasthenia, while he who lives on the vital food of *truth*, as revealed in the progress of society and the evolution of manhood and government, will stand a good chance of a limited immortality, and a better one of an eternal life with good men and women. A man who makes the acquaintance of Socrates, Moses, Paul, John, Marcus Aurelius, Martin Luther, Shakespeare, Milton, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and Rhode Island worthies, on this side, will be the sooner admitted to good society on the other. History is not only the food and tonic of youth, but it is the fountain of perpetual life. In truth, youth has made history. Young men have fought and won the world's greatest battles. The youthful David saved Israel. The young man, Joseph in Egypt, made the Jewish race and the Christ possible. Philip of Macedon won his first battle at 24; founded Phillippi at 26; made peace with Athens at 36, and died at the head of the great Empire of Macedon at 46.

Alexander won his first great battle at 18; came to the throne at 20; at 21 had subdued Greece; had conquered Egypt and founded Alexandria at 24; overthrew the Persian Empire at 25; invaded India at 30, and died, the ruler of the Eastern world he had conquered, at 33.

Cæsar was a soldier at 20; Pontifex Maximus at 37; conquered all Gaul at 42; crossed the Rubicon at 51, and died at the hands of Brutus at 56.

Napoleon won his first campaign at 27 in Italy; conquered Italy at 28; was master of Egypt at 29; Emperor of France at 35; King of Italy at 36; met Waterloo at 46. Had he turned historian at St. Helena, he would not have died of melancholia at 53.

Luther was 43 when he challenged the Church with his 95 theses against Indulgences.

Joan of Arc saved France at 17, and was burned at the stake at 19.

John Hancock was 39 when he signed the Declaration of Independence, and Washington was 43 when he took command of the Continental Army.

Jesus, the Christ, began his world conquest at 33.

Rhode Island was planted by young men and women. Roger Williams was 36; William Coddington, 38; John Clarke, 30; Harry Vane, 27; Benedict Arnold, 22; William Harris, 36; John Green, surgeon, 40; Anne Hutchinson, 49; Samuel Gorton, 46; Stephen Hopkins entered public life at 21 and signed the Declaration of Independence at 69, with the words, "Though my hand trembles, my heart is firm."

Nathanael Greene was 33 when called to the command of the Army of Observation, and Governor William Sprague was 31 at the Battle of Bull Run.

Grant was a Major General at 39, won Vicksburg and Chatta-

noogo at 41; made Lieutenant General at 42, and at 43 received Lee's surrender at Appomatox.

Theodore Roosevelt was a legislator in New York at 24; Governor of New York at 40, and President of the United States at 42. What other worlds he has to conquer we know not.

Rhode Island youthful individualism has led in initiative principles and instructive legislation.

There are four reasons why youth has made history. The first is that youth has high ideals. A man dies with his ideals. The second is that youth builds on a creative imagination and an abounding hope and courage. Still more, conscience has its most efficient activities in youth. The energies of manhood are at their best.

The student of history lives in the atmosphere of the new life. The real life of man and the great truths of history, to wit,—Righteousness, Honesty, Sacrifice, Liberty, are the real Immortals, and the members of the Rhode Island Citizens' Historical Association are the disciples of the Immortals.

This Association was organized in March, 1883, of veterans of the town, old-time merchants and others who wanted to renew their youth in a comfortable home downtown, to meet socially, smoke their pipes, and talk over their young days—a sort of youthful revival meeting. Governor Elisha Dyer, Senior, more than any other man is responsible for our being here to-day. It was in his office, No. 26 Westminster Street, that the first meeting of sixty-eight persons was held on March 1, 1883. The sum total of the ages of sixty-two persons present was 4,647, or an average of seventy-five years. Stephen Hawkins, age 91, was the oldest, and William A. Mowry, age 54, was the youngest of the company. Seventeen of the group were over eighty years old, and they called themselves Veterans. They had, in the main ceased to be actors in life's drama, and now chose to be seekers and recorders of their own deeds and the deeds of other men. That was a remarkable body of men. Its

first President had been Governor of the State from 1857 to 1859. He had also been a soldier and an officer in the War of the Rebellion. Thomas J. Hill had been a distinguished manufacturer of the State, a legislator, a banker. He knew Providence when it had only 16,000 inhabitants and had been a part of its growth and prosperity. Thomas Davis had been a successful manufacturer and an active politician, representing the State in the Congress of the United States 1853-1855. Davis Park, in the Third Ward, is his memorial gift to the city. Charles W. Parsons, a graduate of Harvard College and an eminent physician of the city, was a real student of history and an author of several pamphlets. Henry C. Clark was a man of striking individuality and of great independence of thought and action. John R. Bartlett had been Secretary of State from 1855 to 1872, had edited the Colonial Records, was librarian of the John Carter Brown Library, and one of the most valuable collectors of that invaluable gathering of historical works. James C. Bucklin was an architect and builder of Providence. He designed the Arcade, the Butler Hospital for the Insane, and was the architect of 300 mills and many private residences in all parts of New England.

William G. R. Mowry was a lumber merchant, conducting a large business, and was also engaged in the burning of lime. He was one of the Commissioners to build the City Hall, and was active in temperance, religious and charitable work.

Deacon James H. Read, then 82 years old, had been engaged in the dry goods business in Providence 66 years and had built up, on North Main Street and at Butler Exchange, a large importing and jobbing house. He was a Deacon in the First Baptist Church from 1834 till his death; was an active Christian man in all departments of work, especially interested in students in colleges and seminaries, and at 80 maintained his habit of working fourteen hours a day.

Arnold Peters was a draughtsman and expert machinist, and spent his life in the erection of mills, construction of machinery, etc. He was a man of remarkable activity and energy, and joined this Association at the age of 81.

William Spencer was a country lad from Norwich, coming to Providence about 1832, where he built up a successful grocery business. He was a member of the city government for 20 years. He was a candidate for Mayor in 1880.

Captain Cyrus B. Manchester was a noted seaman, commanding the largest American ships in the emigrant and merchandise lines. He circumnavigated the globe twice. After leaving the sea, he engaged in the immigrant passenger and exchange business, and was agent for underwriters. He was a devotee of horticulture and active in the Horticultural Society. During the Dorr War, he served as a Captain in the militia. He was in the city government seven years, and chairman of the Commissioners to build Point street school-house.

Rev. E. M. Stone was minister of the Free Unitarian Church, on Benefit Street. He was deeply interested in all social and educational, as well as religious, movements and was always a minister of good works in the city.

Rev. Frederick Dennison was the successful pastor of several Baptist Churches, historian of Westerly, and a poet whose lines were always gladly enjoyed. He died while in the service of this Association as its President.

Rev. S. Brenton Shaw was an Episcopal clergyman of ability and success, and his interest in historic and public affairs continued till his death.

Of W. A. Mowry, J. N. Arnold and Richmond P. Everett, we will let them speak for themselves. They are the only living charter members.

These are snapshots of a few of the founders of this 'Associa-

tion,—all men, not a woman in the list. It would be of interest to know who was the first woman admitted, and when.

The Presidents have been:

Elisha Dyer, Sr.	1883-1884—	1
B. B. Hammond	1884-1887—	3
Frederick Dennison	1887-1901—	14
Daniel A. Cook.....	1901-1904—	3
Elisha Dyer, Jr.	1904-1905—	1
Thomas W. Bicknell	1905	

The Association has held more than three hundred and fifty regular and special meetings, at most of which historical papers have been read and discussed.

In 1905, the name was changed by the omission of the word "Veteran," a title which belonged to the founders, but had ceased to be applicable to the membership of recent date. The name not only falsified the membership, but it gave a false impression of and hindered its progressive work. Veterans are supposed to have retired from the service either from age or infirmity. We were turning our faces to the rising rather than the setting sun, and entering on rather than leaving the service.

Twenty-five years ago the Association had 102 members. We now have over 300 active members. Then only men were admitted to membership. Now one-third of our members are women, and the ratio is rapidly growing.

With our name, the purposes of our Association have changed and instead of being a "Home for the Infirm," or a "Sailors' Snug Harbor," we are now an active student body, interested in historic study in natural and normal ways. We are aiming to do constructive work and to encourage the study of local history (1) among our membership, (2) among the pupils of our schools, and (3) by public addresses, newspaper articles and other agencies, among the people.

Our Saturday Outings at historic places have enabled our members to come in contact with the *genius loci* of the transaction. We have traversed the town streets with Roger Williams, Mary Dyer, Richard Scott and Benedict Arnold; have fought again the battle of Rhode Island on Butts and Quaker Hills, Portsmouth, and have witnessed the tragedy of the Michael Pierce Fight at the Ford of the Blackstone. We have resurrected Rhode Island Independence Day so that it may soon be publicly recognized as a State holiday, and have been active in memorials and monuments at historic sites.

We propose to trace out, as far as may be possible, the historic life of the towns of Rhode Island, and to awaken in the minds of the people the duty of educating children in the events which have made the communities noted. We are working to preserve the mortuary monuments in our cemeteries and so secure a record of the tombstones throughout the State. We are organizing historic clubs in our schools and elsewhere, to recognize historic days and to make trips to historic places.

We are, in fact a school of historic study, now in the primary stage, but we can see such possibilities before us that we are inspired to undertake what at first seemed almost an impossible task. We have the press with us, and with our present plans we hope in the near future to show that we are doing a much needed work in the recognition of the historic riches of our State, and in awakening in the minds of our whole population a deeper love for the present, because of our splendid past. Our membership sweeps the gamut from fourteen to eighty-four years, but all are possessed of the spirit of historic youth, and it is hard to tell which is young or which old. In the life of yesterday is the germ of the life of to-morrow. Our note to-day is one of cheer and courage for historic work, for as we touch the new-old life of the past we become transformed into knights, panoplied for the future.

The Rhode Island Citizens Historical Association, on its 25th anniversary, no longer

"Weeps o'er its wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
Shoulders its crutch, and shows how fields were won."

It has entered on a young manhood, holding the truth of Achilles to Odysseus; "I would rather toil as a day laborer on the earth, than reign here as prince of dead multitudes." Apollo's form is on our mental shield: the god of light, of life, of warmth, of beauty, of perpetual youth, strength, and endurance. While we stand guard over the historic records of the past, we

"Believe the best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made."

HISTORICAL REVIEW.

The Rhode Island Citizens' Historical Association owes its life to the Hon. Elisha Dyer, Governor of Rhode Island from May, 1857, to May, 1859. He was the son of Elisha Dyer, a merchant and manufacturer of Providence, who was the son of Anthony and Sarah Bishop Dyer of Gloucester, R. I. Of Elisha Dyer, Senior, it is recorded that he would not accept a political office, and that he never would accept over six per cent. for the use of money.

This Dyer family, by the way, is in straight descent from William and Mary Dyer, of London, England, who settled at Boston in 1635; were banished to Rhode Island in 1638 for Quakerism, where William became clerk of the Newport Colony, and both were leaders in the Quaker faith, for which Mary Dyer gave her life on the scaffold on Boston Common in 1660, being possessed, as the historians say, "with the insane desire for martyrdom." On the mother side, the Dyers are lineal descendants of Gabriel Bernon, a merchant of an ancient and honorable family of La Rochelle, France, who was a Huguenot refugee in 1688; became a distinguished citizen of Massachusetts and Rhode Island colonies; was

instrumental in founding Trinity Episcopal Church, Newport, St. Paul's, Wickford, and St. John's, Providence, and died in Providence, 1736.

In giving an account of the origin of this Association, Gov. Dyer refers to the incident that on his return (August, 1882) from a year's absence in London, he noted "the fast increasing absence of familiar facts and faces," "changes which he had not so pain fully realized when in daily contact with them," and he says, "I felt it almost a conscientious duty to preserve the record of what remained and if possible to recall that of the past. I was also stimulated," he says, "by the hope of promoting the interest of the Rhode Island Historical Society, of which I have been so many years a member."

A few days before the first social and informal meeting, Governor Dyer said that while passing through Dorrance street, he observed workmen demolishing the old stone building, known as the Dorrance Street Theatre. The thought that other old landmarks must sooner or later succumb to the inevitable and unconquerable march of progress, prompted him to call a meeting of his old-time associates, acquaintances, and others.

A REMARKABLE COMPANY OF MEN.

Accordingly, on the first day of March, 1883, there met at the office of ex-Governor Dyer, Room 19, No. 26 Westminster street, at 3 o'clock P. M., a company of the old-time merchants of Providence to talk over the former condition of the old **business** marts of Providence and prepare a sketch of the old **streets** **for** the archives of the Rhode Island Historical Society. From about seventy-five invitations extended sixty-eight persons were present, all but six of whom recorded the years of their birth. The sum total of the ages of the sixty-two old-time merchants of this city of record was 4,647, an average of seventy-five years. The oldest

person present was Stephen Hawkins, aged 91, of 43 Governor street, and the youngest was William A. Mowry, aged 54, of Woonasquatucket avenue. Seventeen of the company were over eighty years of age. Dr. Charles W. Parsons presided and J. Erastus Lester was the recorder. Mr. George Beverly, of 51 John street, set the ball of discussion rolling by giving information relative to the old Washington Insurance building, on the corner of Westminster street and Washington Row. Interesting facts, amusing stories and dramatic incidents occupied the attention of these Providence veterans, and the secretary states, "there was lively discussion at all times and some ludicrous events were mentioned." So much interest was awakened in and by this meeting that the "old-time merchants" adjourned to meet on Thursday, March 15th, to organize an association auxiliary to the Rhode Island Historical Society. At that meeting, presided over by Mr. William A. Mowry, it was "Resolved, That the recent informal meeting of veteran citizens of this city, at the office of ex-Governor Elisha Dyer, and the interest awakened in historical matters connected with this city and state thereby, justifies the organization of an association auxiliary to the Rhode Island Historical Society, to be called 'The Veteran Citizens' Historical Association,' the object of which will be the search for, and record of, such information pertaining to the history and traditions of Providence and of the State of Rhode Island, as shall be of permanent interest and value to our citizens and to historic literature."

A printed report of the first year's work of the Association is to be found in the secretary's record book, prepared by Secretary Hammond, who took an active and lively interest in the work. He says, "Four informal meetings were held before organization and fourteen regular meetings since, at which more than twenty papers were read by prominent Providence gentlemen, among whom appear the names of Governor Dyer, Edward Field, H. N. Slater,

W. M. Bailey, Rev. Frederick Denison, Augustine Jones, W. A. Mowry, Thomas Harkness, Mrs. Harriet A. Brownell, Rev. S. Brenton Shaw, George Beverly, and others.

Prof. William Gammell, the president of the Rhode Island Historical Society, in his annual address refers to the work of this Association as follows: "No result of these newly developed tastes is more striking than that which is found in the formation and services of the Association of veteran citizens for historical inquiries which has been formed in Providence. It grew out of the interviews and conversations of a few elderly gentlemen who took pleasure in comparing together their personal recollections of the town as it was in the time of their boyhood. Their conversation related at first to the spots where certain famous buildings used to stand, to the wharves and water lines at which great ships used to land their cargoes, and at length they have extended to almost every feature of Providence and its environs as they were early in the present century, and even to the traditions relating to the people and events which have come down from still earlier periods. By its agency many historical memoranda have been brought to light, and important historical papers have been prepared for publication, some of which have been deposited in our archives."

Secretary Hammond adds: "A great future, an undiscovered country, of almost magical historical information, lies just beyond and about us; into this let us hasten and reap our reward." He records the departure of Samuel James, the first president-elect, Edwin M. Stone, Duty Evans, Arnold Peters and George W. Danielson, "as silently as the ebbing of a tide, as the flowing away of a stream, as the passing out of daylight into twilight beyond our mortal sight."

He reports one hundred and fifty members still left at the close of the first year, "a part of whom are ladies, and thus both wheels are on one chariot."

Treasurer Everett reported the Association out of debt, with \$2.03 in the treasury. Collections had been made to the amount of \$106.40, of which \$53.02 came from the Shaw Memorial concert. The expenses amounted to \$104.37.

On account of severe illness and sore bereavement in the death of his wife, Governor Dyer resigned the presidency at the close of the first year, and Secretary Hammond was elected president, and Rev. F. Denison secretary, each holding these offices by annual election until 1887, when Secretary Denison was chosen president to fill the office made vacant by the death of President B. B. Hammond. Mrs. H. A. Horton succeeded Mr. Richmond P. Everett as treasurer in 1885, and served until 1888, when W. B. Spencer was chosen, serving until the election of our present treasurer, Mrs. Hattie W. B. Chafee, in 1891.

Rev. Frederic Denison occupied the presidential chair from 1887 till 1901, followed by Daniel A. Cook from 1901 to 1903, by Elisha Dyer from December, 1903, to February 1905, who was succeeded by Thomas W. Bicknell, the present president.

Rev. S. B. Morse was elected secretary July 11, 1887, but J. N. Arnold acted as secretary until June, 1888, when Noah J. Arnold was elected and served until May 8, 1893, when we were introduced to the voluminous, luminous and somewhat picturesque records of Daniel A. Cook, who filled this important office to the great pleasure and satisfaction of the society and his own personal enjoyment, until his promotion to the presidency in 1901. Francis Gallagher, John H. Brown, J. H. Hall, Jr., M. H. Paddock and Charles H. Eddy have been Mr. Cook's successors.

The organization was incorporated under the name, "The Rhode Island Veteran Citizens' Historical Association," but the name was changed to the Rhode Island Citizens' Historical Association, by unanimous vote, at the April meeting, 1905.

Since March, 1883, this Association has held monthly meet-

ings for ten months in each year, and its regular and special meetings number more than three hundred, at each of which, as a rule, one principal historical address has been given by some person specially qualified to speak thereon, supplemented by brief addresses by members and invited guests. These addresses have, in the main, related to the history and biography of Providence and the State of Rhode Island.

In the winter of 1905-6, the Association organized a series of addresses which were given the grammar school pupils of the public schools of Providence. These addresses proved to be well adapted to the minds and tastes of the children, and, as a whole, were complimented by the Superintendent of Schools. The plan was also carried out during the winter of 1906-7, with good results, in awakening in the minds of teachers and pupils a deeper interest in local history. It is intended to continue this educational work in the form of familiar talks, with stereopticon illustrations, and to extend the work, as far as possible, through the schools of the State.

The Association inaugurated a plan of setting boulder monuments to mark historic sites, following the example set by President Bicknell in installing a quartz boulder, with a bronze tablet, at the graves of family slaves at Prince's Hill, Barrington. The Association has dedicated a granite boulder at Hampden Meadows, Barrington, over the supposed grave of Rev. John Myles, founder of the First Baptist Church in Massachusetts, and has also dedicated an iron-stone monument with a bronze tablet near the site of the meeting house erected by John Myles and his associates for the use of the first Church.

The Association took an active part in the location and dedication of a quartz boulder on the battlefield of the famous Michael Pierce Fight, and President Bicknell has edited the neat volume of addresses and poems relating to that memorable event.

During the year 1906, the Association enjoyed several successful historical outings. These proved so very interesting and profitable that during the spring, summer and autumn of 1907 twenty-three outings were participated in by a large number of the members with invited guests. By reason of the interest awakened by this study of history, first-hand, more than one hundred members were added to the Association. The season of 1908 has fourteen of these outings announced, and at the moment of this writing have been more largely attended than last year, indicating a great popular desire to visit historic spots and learn what the localities and local testimony have to say as to the truth or falsity of oral or written statements. The outings are clearly established as a permanent and important feature of the work of this Association.

The most important single act of the Association has been the inauguration of the public celebration of Rhode Island's Independence Day, May 4th, 1776. The first celebration was held at the Mathewson Street M. E. Church, Providence, May 4th, 1906. The opening address was made by President Bicknell, followed by a scholarly address by ex-Governor Charles Warren Lippitt of Providence. Gov. Lippitt's address was the product of long and careful research, and its conclusions established beyond dispute or question the claim to priority on the part of the Colony of Rhode Island in the formal act of separation of all organic political relations to the authority and government of Great Britain. Addresses were also made by Governor George H. Utter, ex-Governor William Sprague, and others, in the presence of a large audience. The public celebration of Independence Day in 1907 was held at the Old State House on Benefit street, Providence, where addresses were made by President Bicknell, Governor J. H. Higgins, Hon. Theodore Francis Greene, and Hon. Roswell B. Burchard, Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives. An original poem was read by Mrs. Harriette M. Miller of Providence. The exercises

took place in the old Representatives' Hall, where the Declaration was first read by its author, Hon. Jonathan Arnold and where it was enacted, with only six negative votes, on Saturday, May 4th, 1776.

The celebration of May 4th, 1908, was also held at the Old State House. By order of Governor Higgins, salutes were fired at Providence, Newport, Bristol, and at all other points where State batteries were located. The flags of the State, of the cities, and towns, and from private residences were unfurled in honor of the day.

The Historic Tree

(A Poem By Mrs. Harriette M. Miller.)

Up above the silvery cloud-land,
Far above the starry dome,
Stand God's angels, guiding mortals,
Watching from their radiant home,

They have ministered in sorrow,
Often soothed the tearful eyes;
Whispering gently—"Comfort borrow,
God is blessing in disguise."

Pilgrims, Puritans and soldiers,
Each has known their constant care;
All have heard sweet words of comfort,
Floating down from realms of air.

Year by year they watched the struggles
Of our sires, 'til freedom came;
Cheered the heart of dauntless Roger,
With "Soul Liberty"—his aim.

Then came years of Indian warfare
And the galling British yoke,
Till Rhode Island's sires, in council,
First the words of Freedom spoke,

Soon fair homes adorned the valley,
On the hillside towered the spire,
And the college halls were rising—
Brains must work, and souls aspire.

For two centuries, Rhode Island,
Small in size—but large in worth,
Built her mills,—and schools,—and churches,
And her great heart blessed the earth.

How her soldiers rushed to battle!
How they fought to right the wrong!
How they died—has all been told you,
Both in history—and song.

Years rolled on—sweet Peace was folding
North and South in her embrace;
'All Rhode Island's wheels of labor
Moved again with tireless pace.

How those Guardian Angels watched her!
 Loving this historic spot.
 Fearing in her peace and plenty,
 All her past would be forgot.

Anxiously they gazed beneath them,
 Murmured one—in accents low
 Fair Rhode Island needs more landmarks,
 Which shall point to long ago.

Else the hum of trade and traffic
 And the wealth of mine and mart,
 Will destroy all patriot feeling,
 Blot old memories from the heart.

“I know well a chosen spirit,
 Who has gained the people’s love;
 All unseen, I’ll seek his presence
 With our message from above.”

So away on downy pinions,
 Through the azure depths he flew;
 Secretly, he thrilled that leader
 With an inspiration true;

Then he called his friends around him,
 Told them all the wondrous tale,
 How the Lord had laid upon him
 Work,—in which he must not fail.

“You, my comrades, must be helpers,
 Loyal hearts must beat as one;
 We must save our state traditions
 Ere this century has run.”

Let us plant a tree,—historic,
 Here, upon its native soil,
 Sink its roots with sacred memories,
 Fence it round,—to guard from spoil.

It shall rise in strength, toward heaven,
 Every limb historic truth.
 Let no “guess-work” on its branches,
 Lead astray our loyal youth.

Years twenty-five, have rolled their courses,
 Since the planting of that tree;
 Of those who dug,—and set,—and fenced it
 Today,—we number only three.*

But they remain, an inspiration
 To all who love historic lore;
 They root out weeds—lop fiction branches
 And write us histories,—“galore.”

The tree is now both large and strong;
 Its foliage covers wondrous space;
 We sit beneath, and watch the limbs,
 Pointing to some historic place.

We've solved the problems of our city,
 North Main street with its churches old,
 Where Williams lived, and where he died,
 And seen the pen, where slaves were sold.

We've seen the house where heroes met
 The night the Gaspee soared in flame,
 O! glorious sight! we have not yet
 Dreamed of one-half our spots of fame.

And still we search. If our tree point
 Towards Barrington, or Portsmouth plain,
 Or Newmans grave,—or that of Myles
 With trusty guides, we're off again.

We've stood within the ancient room,
 Where Prescott hid,—but Barton found;
 We gathered there from fields of bloom
 The daisies on historic ground.

We've climbed the rock where Philip died;
 We've picknicked on Quinsnickett Hill;
 We've rested in the Quaker church;
 We've stood within Old Frenchtown's mill.

And then the fellowship we've had,
 The converse sweet,—in God's free air,
 While guardian angels as of old
 Have guided safely everywhere.

*Mowry, Everett and Arnold.

AN ADDRESS

BY

WILLIAM A. MOWRY, PH. D.

ON

THOMAS WILSON DORR

Ladies and Gentlemen—I am happy to be here with you to-day, at this 25th anniversary of your Society—It is a double pleasure, because I helped found it and was one of its charter members.

At the very outset I may subject myself to the ancient charge of “bringing coals to Newcastle,” by coming over the border from the Bay State to these Plantations to present to you a chapter in your own history, especially a chapter so well known, so familiar to all Rhode Islanders, as the story of Governor Dorr and the war of 1842.

If this charge should be laid against me, I should have two things to say in defense—1. I am almost a Rhode Islander myself. My native place was in a border town, and I was born in the last house in Massachusetts, within a half mile of the Rhode Island line, and fully half of my life has been spent in your state. 2. Furthermore, I shall take the liberty of saying that the good people of your state need enlightenment upon the life and character of Thomas W. Dorr. The conflict of 1842 was so severe, and its outcome so decided that strong prejudices were left in the minds of the inhabitants of the state, which have hardly disappeared, even after the lapse of more than three score years.

Moreover, my theme is not the “Dorr War,” but it is rather the life and character of Governor Dorr—his position in society, his ability, his learning, his patriotism, his philanthropy, and—his mistakes—his shortcomings.

How difficult it is to get at the real facts of history, and even when the *facts* are agreed upon, how much more difficult it is to give the proper interpretation to those facts,—to connect them properly, and to show clearly and correctly *cause and effect*. At the time of the troubles of 1842 I was just upon the border of the two states, already mentioned, with friends living over the line in your state, so that we had daily and almost hourly communication with Rhode Islanders of both parties. During all the years since those troublous times I have given no little study to the questions at issue, and have had intimate acquaintance with many of the leading actors on both sides.

THE CHARTER OF 1663.

The Charter of 1663; the defeated Landholders' Constitution, the People's Constitution of 1842, and the adopted constitution of 1843, with its amendments of 1854, '64, '86, '88, '89, '92, and '93; the "Dorriad" of Governor Anthony; the trial of Governor Dorr for treason; his conviction and imprisonment; Burke's Report, Dorr's pardon, his remaining life, and his death in December, 1854; altogether form one of the most interesting, most difficult, but most profitable chapters of governmental history to be found in all the annals, ancient or modern.*

SUFFRAGE RESTRICTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The sole cause of this protracted struggle was the restricted suffrage, and the unjust representation of towns and cities in the General Assembly. In 1723-4 the General Assembly passed an act

*The singular thing about this is that for almost sixty years no unbiased history of the "Dorr War" was written. Every life of Dorr and every history of the troubles of 1842 was of a partisan nature. The only judicial history of the suffrage movement is in a subscription book written by my son and published a few years ago by Preston & Rounds. Its title page is as follows: "The Dorr War, or the Constitutional Struggle in Rhode Island, by Arthur May Mowry, with an introduction by Albert Bushnell Hart, Professor of American History, Harvard University, Providence, R. I. Preston & Rounds Co., 1901."

granting admission as freeman to a "freeholder of lands, tenements or hereditaments in such town where he shall be admitted, free, of the value of one hundred pounds, or to the value of forty shillings per annum or the eldest son of such freeholder; any act, custom or usage to the contrary hereof notwithstanding."

POPULAR ERRORS CONCERNING THIS SUFFRAGE RESTRICTION.

It will be observed that this was an act of the General Assembly, but it must be noted also that the notion has been widely held that this provision was in the charter—that that instrument prescribed this limitation of suffrage. Indeed this opinion is still held by many all over the land. It is found in many of our school histories and other books, where one might suppose the author would know what the facts were. Look a moment at some of our school histories:—Barnes' School History says, "The Charter granted by Charles II. was still in force. *It* limited the right of suffrage to those holding a certain amount of property." In an old edition of Barnes' Brief History, it says that Dorr "made an attack on the state arsenal but was driven off by United States troops."

Even so learned a scholar as McMaster, says: "The Old Colonial Charter was still in force and under it no man could vote unless he owned real estate worth \$134, or renting for \$7 a year, or was the eldest son of such a freeman." One of the most popular school histories is Montgomery's. In his "Student's History" we read as follows: "Under its ancient charter the right of suffrage in that state was limited to landholders (holding an estate valued at not less than \$134) and to their eldest sons." Waddy Thompson says: "The government was still administered under the charter granted by Charles II., in 1663," and "only men who owned property and their eldest sons were allowed to vote." He also adds: "The Federal Government interposed and the Dorr people finally gave way." Morris states it in this way: "Under the old charter granted in 1662 (?) by

Charles II. only the oldest sons of voters had full right of suffrage, all other voters needing to possess a certain amount of property." Mace, in his history says: "Rhode Island was still governed partly by her old charter, which prevented fully two-thirds of her men of proper age from voting, because they were not land holders." He adds: "On the approach of United States troops Dorr's men deserted him." Jones, in his school history puts the case in this way: "Arrests followed and Dorr fled from the little state. He soon returned with an armed force and the Federal Government was obliged to interfere. It is said that when Dorr found himself confronted by the soldiers, he made an address to his followers, exhorting them to stand firm. 'If obliged to retreat,' he added, 'do so with your face to the foe; and, inasmuch as I am somewhat lame, I'll begin retreating now.'"

What a travesty on history! And all these books are in use here and there in the schools of this country. Gibson says: "Under the old charter not all male citizens could vote." Further on he adds: "the state was on the verge of a civil war, and the General Government was called upon to keep the peace."

Even Elson, generally a careful scholar, who has written an excellent work on the history of our country, fails to be exact and states the case thus: "Rhode Island, after the Declaration of Independence, retained its charter government and many of the people were dissatisfied at the limited suffrage. * * * * * A new government was set up but the insurgents were dispersed by national aid and Dorr was taken captive."

ERRORS SUMMARIZED.

So, I might go on quoting from nearly one hundred school histories which are on the shelves of my own library, and not find half a dozen free from error. We shall see, as we study the subject how far from the truth these statements are. Suffice it to say here and now that

1. The restricted suffrage was the result of laws made by the General Assembly and that body had full authority to broaden that suffrage at any time and to any extent, that they might choose to do so. It was not a provision of the charter.

2. No United States force was used in the contest.

3. Dorr was not captured, but delivered himself up for trial after his voluntary return to the state.

4. It is needless to say that the story of Dorr's lameness and his retreat was manufactured out of whole cloth.

It is said that at one time that sentence alone prevented the introduction of Barnes' Brief History into the schools of Providence. In later editions the story was omitted. It is time that we looked at the charter itself, to see what that document does or does not say upon the question of voting for government officers and for the making of laws.

THE CHARTER GIVES THE POWER OVER SUFFRAGE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The charter in careful detail establishes and defines the "General Assembly." It then says: "They shall have, and have hereby given to them, full power and authority, from time to time and at all times hereafter, to appoint, alter and change such days, times and places of meeting and General Assembly, as they shall think fit, and to choose, nominate and appoint, such and so many other persons as they shall think fit and shall be willing to accept the same, to be free of the said company, and body politic, and them into the same to admit; and to elect and constitute such offices and officers * * * * as they shall think fit, * * * * and from time to time to make, ordain, constitute or repeal, such laws, statutes, orders and ordinances * * * as to them shall seem meet for the good and welfare of the said company; * * * * and also to regulate and order the way and manner of all elections to offices

and places of trust, and to prescribe, limit and distinguish the numbers and bounds of all places, towns or cities, within the limits and bounds hereinafter mentioned, and not herein particularly named, who have, or shall have, the power of electing and sending of freemen to the said General Assembly, and also to order, direct and authorize the imposing of lawful and reasonable fines, mulcts, imprisonments, and execute other punishment, pecuniary and corporal upon offenders; * * * and to direct, rule, order and dispose of, all other matters and things."

By the above extracts it will be clearly seen that all matters of law making, voting, offices and officers, punishments, etc., are placed in the hands of the General Assembly with full powers.

Furthermore, nowhere in the Charter is there any enactment specifying who shall be freemen, or who shall become voters. All such matters, as shown by the above extracts are clearly placed in the hands of the General Assembly, and they, the said General Assembly could change, alter and amend any rule or regulation relating thereto.

ASSEMBLY UNWILLING TO PART WITH POWER.

The point to be observed, however, is that the members of said General Assembly were never willing to part with any power residing with them. There has always been something singular in Rhode Island politics. The initial cause of this may have been the intense individualism which was engendered by the peculiar circumstances under which the first settlements were made at Providence, Newport and Warwick.

Most of the early English settlements along this coast, like Jamestown, Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Hartford, New Haven and Philadelphia, were made by a homogeneous set of men. Rhode Island settlers, on the other hand, were a motly crew, no two men thinking alike. Roger Williams, at the very outset, established and

maintained liberty of conscience, "Freedom in Religious Concernments," as it was called, and in consequence thereof the discontented from the Bay Colony and elsewhere moved over into the Providence Plantations. One is reminded of David in the Cave of Adullam, when "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented gathered themselves unto him."

But David persevered, so did Roger Williams. David became king and established the city of Jerusalem as the capital of his kingdom. So Rhode Island prospered and is today the richest state in our glorious Union, the most densely populated, a real hive of industry, activity and intelligence. It has made gigantic progress in education, in industrial pursuits, in science, the arts, wealth and in government.

VIEW OF COLONEL BURRILL.

In the year 1797 Col. George R. Burrill, brother of United States Senator James Burrill, in a Fourth of July oration used the following language: Representation always supposes proportion." "Equal representation is involved in the very idea of free government." But he saw already how difficult it would be to effect any change in the state government. He said: "To petition this legislature for equal representation is to require the majority to surrender their power, a requisition which *it is not in human nature to grant.*"

Doubtless, this was the prevailing view of the people of the state, and is the principal explanation of the general apathy from that time onward to the controversy of 1842.

SPASMODIC EFFORTS.

It is true that some spasmodic efforts were made from time to time to secure a broader representation and suffrage, but in them all the people were lukewarm and no results followed. Then

efforts were made in 1811, 1817, 1821, 1822, 1823; and in 1824 a constitution was voted down. But it should be said that this proposed constitution was made by the land holders and did not extend the suffrage, or remedy the unjust apportionment of the representation in the General Assembly.

SUFFRAGE SENTIMENT FROM 1825 TO 1840.

From the year 1825 to 1840 there was a continuous agitation of the question. In the latter year an "Address to the Citizens of Rhode Island who are denied the right of suffrage" was circulated proposing and laying plans for a convention to frame a constitution. All male citizens over twenty-one years of age should be allowed to vote for delegates and if "the whole number of votes cast exceeds the whole vote of the previous general election for representatives to Congress, then the convention will unquestionably represent the majority of the people and will therefore as unquestionably have the sovereign right to frame a constitution for the State."

In 1840 "The Rhode Island Suffrage Association" was organized for the purpose of inaugurating a new agitation for a constitution with freer suffrage. Within a few months nearly every town in the State had an organization of this kind.

Thus far Mr. Dorr has not appeared prominent in this movement. Before continuing the account of these efforts of the people for a new constitution let us turn our attention to that young lawyer who is soon to be identified with the people's uprising, and whose brilliant and promising life is to be blighted and even sacrificed by the movement.

THOMAS WILSON DORR.

Thomas Wilson Dorr was born in Providence on the fifth of November, 1805. He was descended from one of the first families

of his native city and state. His father, Sullivan Dorr, was one of the foremost citizens, a successful manufacturer, president of a large fire insurance company, and possessed of great wealth, so that his family was surrounded with luxury. His son Thomas was given every advantage in his youth. He was prepared for college at the renowned Phillips Exeter Academy, from which institution he entered Harvard University at the early age of fourteen years, and graduated with honor before he was eighteen years of age. He studied law in New York in the office of the distinguished Chancellor Kent, and began its practice in his native city before he was twenty-one years of age. His career at the bar was brilliant from the start.

DORR IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

He was elected by the citizens of Providence to the General Assembly of the state when he was only twenty-eight years old, and re-elected four years in succession.

Here he was active in many ways. In his second year in the Assembly he brought in four resolutions:

1. Against the removal of the public funds from the Bank of the United States.
2. Against executive control of the United States Treasury.
3. Against the spoils system in national politics.
4. In favor of re-chartering the Bank of the United States.

DORR'S CAREER.

Here was a young man, less than thirty years of age presenting to the legislature of his state four important resolutions, *all* of a national character, and they were all adopted by practically a two-thirds vote. Two years later he successfully championed the repeal of a law which gave the state banks a power over debtors not permitted to other creditors, a power which practically made the bank a preferred creditor. During the same year he opposed the attempt

to enact laws against the abolitionists, and, again, he took a strong and decided position in favor of the extension of suffrage. This offended the leaders of the Whig party, with which up to this time he had affiliated, so that when the Whigs took their stand against a constitutional convention Mr. Dorr left that party and allied himself with the Democrats. In 1837 he ran for Congress, but was defeated. Having identified himself with the Democratic party, he ran for Representative in 1839 and came near being elected. He ran considerably ahead of his ticket. But the politicians of Rhode Island had no use for a man of such pronounced independence. He remained quiet, as to political matters until he accepted the People's nomination for Governor under their new constitution.

DORR ON THE SCHOOL BOARD.

Although not a member of the legislature he did not remain indifferent to public interests. This was the time when educational affairs stirred the people of Rhode Island to an unusual degree. A few years later Henry Barnard, who was Commissioner of Education from 1843 to 1849, revolutionized the state as to its school system. The city of Providence had already been revolutionized, and it was Thomas W. Dorr, who perhaps more than any other man did it. He was for a series of years a very active and energetic member of the school board of the city and in 1841 he was elected, almost unanimously, President of the Board.

This was the time when an entirely new system was put in operation. A high school building, six new grammar school houses and, I think, ten primary school buildings were erected. Thomas W. Dorr was the active man in all this. It was his energy and persistency that put the entire system on a new and vastly improved basis. The present excellent condition of the schools of this enterprising city owes much to the single fact that seventy years ago they had the valued assistance of Thomas W. Dorr.

DORR, A MODEL CITIZEN.

Mr. Dorr was active, during the years we are now considering, in various directions. He was a leading member and Treasurer of the Rhode Island Historical Society. He was appointed by the state Commissioner of the Scituate Bank, and he was administrator and trustee of the property of several private individuals. In fact he was one of the model citizens of Rhode Island.

TESTIMONY OF THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL.

Here is the testimony of his bitterest enemy, the Providence Journal: He was a man "endowed with intellectual powers which had they been properly directed, would have always secured him a commanding influence. Those powers, too, were disciplined by an education more accomplished perhaps than any other man of his age in Rhode Island had been privileged to obtain. As a man of science and letters, he might have obtained honorable distinction had he chosen to dedicate his time to science or to letters. As a statesman he might have rendered his native state substantial service. He might have been a true-hearted private gentleman, honored by the respect and confidence of the community in which he resided."

BURKE'S REPORT.

In Burke's Report we read: "Mr. Dorr is an educated gentleman of the most respectable family and connections. He, personally, has stood high in the confidence and esteem of his fellow-citizens. His whole course of life, his sentiments, and his actions have been such as to free him from the imputation of having in anything been governed by other motives than a desire and a zeal for the best interests of his fellow-citizens and of the State."

These, then, are the pictures of Mr. Dorr before he became the leading champion of an enlarged suffrage in the State of Rhode Island.

SUMMARY OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

Later, in this paper, I purpose to show what an enlarged vision he had of national and international affairs, even to the end of his life. For, as we shall see, this vigorous specimen of humanity, this healthy youth who achieved his parchment from Harvard College at eighteen, this stalwart young man who made an honorable record of statesmanship before he was thirty years of age, this strong, sturdy, philanthropist, whose downfall came to him at the age of thirty-seven years, died before he had completed the life of half a century.

RHODE ISLAND IN 1840-42.

Let us now consider the affairs of 1840 to 1842, the unsuccessful and after all successful effort of the people to secure a wider suffrage.

In 1841 Suffrage Associations had been founded in the principal towns of the state. "The Campaign of Education" had fairly begun. The people were now awake to the issue. But, on what principles and after what fashion should this campaign be carried on.

It seemed clear to many that a constitution giving a more just representation in the General Assembly and a more extended suffrage to the people should be made and adopted. Of course if the ruling class, namely, the landowners would favor the adoption of such a constitution then it could be brought about in a legal way and in accordance with existing legal forms. But the landowners were not yet sufficiently "educated" to consent to this. How then could it be accomplished.

ONLY COURSE OPEN TO THE SUFFRAGISTS.

Under the prevailing conditions there seemed to the friends of "Suffrage" but one way, and that was for the people, as a whole,

to act; to rise in the majesty of their sovereign rights as men and frame a new constitution, adopt it by vote outside of existing laws. There seemed no alternative but to give up the contest and remain as heretofore, suffering the evident injustice of the landholders oligarchy.

PRINCIPLES OF THE SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION.

The Rhode Island Suffrage Association had laid down and published nine principles and two resolutions as follows:

1. "All men are created free and equal."
2. Possession of property should not create political advantages for its holder.
3. Every body politic should have for its foundation a bill of rights and a written constitution.
4. Rhode Island has neither.
5. The Charter lost its authority when the United States became independent.
6. Every state is entitled to a Republican form of government.
7. Any state is anti-republican which keeps a majority of the people from participating in its affairs.
8. By every right, human and divine, the majority should govern.
9. The time has gone by for submission to most unjust outrages upon social and political rights.

These propositions led to the following resolutions:

1. The power of the state should be vested in the hands of the people, and the people have a right from time to time to assemble together, either by themselves or their representatives, for the establishment of a republican form of government.
2. Whenever a majority of the citizens of this state, who are recognized as citizens of the United States, shall, by their delegates in convention assembled, draught a constitution, and the same shall

be accepted by their constituents, it will be, to all intents and purposes, the law of the State."

Whatever may be said of these "principles" and "resolutions," to the friends of suffrage in Rhode Island no other course seemed to promise any success to their desires and they were adopted and acted upon by the suffrage party, generally called "Dorrites."

Had that party succeeded possibly they might have been regarded more favorably today than is now the case. "Nothing succeeds like success."

FREEMEN'S OR LANDHOLDERS' CONSTITUTION.

Meantime the General Assembly found it necessary to take some sort of action. The people were too much aroused to utterly ignore the movement. It therefore proposed to call a convention and frame a constitution to be submitted to the people for adoption or rejection. This was done. A constitution called "The Freemen's Constitution" was framed and submitted to the voters, including adult males, not legal voters.

THE PEOPLE'S CONSTITUTION.

At the same time the suffragists had framed "The People's Constitution" and that was submitted to the "people" for their votes.

"The Freemen's Constitution" was voted down and "The People's Constitution" was declared adopted.

Then came the dual government. Under the old Charter Samuel Ward King was elected Governor.

Under the People's Constitution Thomas Wilson Dorr was elected Governor.

Two distinct legislatures were elected.

MISTAKE OF THE CHARTER MEN.

As a matter of fact the people of the State appeared to be nearly equally divided between the two parties. Neither side had full courage, both were fearful of results. During that month of

April, 1842, it would seem that the Charter party by a bold stroke might have brought the State over to the side of law and order, but they feared to enforce coercion measures. It is true the Charter legislature had passed a stringent law imposing fine and imprisonment upon everyone accepting office under the so-called People's Constitution, "and that any person assuming a state office [under that constitution] would be guilty of treason and subject to imprisonment for life."

Had Governor King during the month of April made arrests of those officers elected under the People's Constitution the so-called rebellion would have been easily crushed. The Charter government was in full force, with all its departments complete, while the Dorr government had not been organized. Under the People's Constitution the election took place April 18, and the regular Charter election on the 20th.

The third of May was fixed for the inauguration of Governor Dorr and the meeting of the legislature under the People's Constitution, and May 4th for the inauguration of the newly elected officers of the Charter government.

It would appear almost certain that a bold move for the arrest of those officers elected under the Dorr government, during the month of April would have utterly crushed the incipient government, but not an arrest was made. Everything remained quiet through the state, preparatory to the inauguration of two governors and two legislatures, on the 3rd and 4th of May.

THE DUAL GOVERNMENTS.

On Tuesday, the third of May, the legislature elected under the People's Constitution found the State House closed and met in a foundry building, near Eddy and Dorrance streets.

The next day Wednesday, May 4th, the "Law and Order," or the "Charter" government met as per custom at Newport.

In the new foundry building Governor Dorr took the oath of office as Governor and the members of the General Assembly were sworn in. They were in session two days. Some minor business was transacted. They adjourned to meet on the first Monday in July. The members went home. No Judicial Branch of the government had been formed.

This General Assembly never held another meeting. Here was a grave mistake of this new government.

MISTAKE OF THE DORR PARTY.

That was the moment for getting possession of the government. If they expected success they should have remained in session and secured possession of the state house, the archives and the offices of the state government. Here was the chance and the necessity for strategy, for diplomacy, for *action*, *forcible action* if necessary. The Dorr government should have seized the government archives and possessed themselves of all the state machinery. What an opportunity, while the Charter government with all its officers were absent from Providence in the city of Newport, thirty miles away. Had Governor Dorr and his legislature obtained possession of the state house and put in operation all the machinery of the state government, it would have been difficult for the "Algerine" party to have ousted them.

Evidently Dorr was too honest, too straightforward, too little a politician to manipulate a bold *coup d'état*.

Both parties had appealed to the president, John Tyler, and he had not interfered. He did nothing, except to express his determination to sustain the *de facto* government, that is, the Charter government, if the necessity should arise.

DORR VISITS WASHINGTON.

Governor Dorr went to Washington to interview President Tyler and feel the pulse of Congress. He found a few politicians

among the members of Congress who listened to him and expressed more or less sympathy, but nothing favorable or reliable happened. On the other hand he found the President unalterable in his determination to favor the old government, and to sustain Governor King, if the interference of the national government should be needed.

Governor Dorr had done his best to secure an extended suffrage for Rhode Island. He had failed. He could do no more. The national administration had taken sides with the old government. He could not contend against the whole power of the United States. His followers had shown the white feather. They were not only lukewarm, but they had shown themselves cowardly.

The proposition had been made in the Foundry Legislature to instruct the sheriff to take possession of the state house, but three-fourths of the members of the House were opposed to the measure and only favored a request for the opening of the building. It was Dorr's intention to take possession, but he was overpowered by the House of Representatives. This was Dorr's language in relation to the subject: "The illjudged omission was of fatal consequence. The day was then lost, and ultimately the cause itself, through the vacillating and retreating disposition of its friends. They held, on that day, everything in their own hands. All might then have been accomplished without loss or injury to anyone." Here was the fatal mistake, and it was not the mistake of Dorr, but of his timid supporters. Revolutions do not usually succeed by such timid measures. The hasty adjournment of the People's legislature plainly showed the want of wisdom and good judgment which characterized Dorr's followers and advisers.

GOVERNOR DORR IN NEW YORK.

Governor Dorr was on his way back from Washington. He arrived in New York on the 12th of May. He had no plans for

future action. Indeed, nothing appeared to be possible to do. The cause was lost. Dorr himself did not hesitate to state to his friends whom he met in that city that he could do no more, that he must trust to the promise of the President that he would procure an act of amnesty for all past offenders.

Had Governor Dorr then not stopped in New York, had he come directly home to Rhode Island, the controversy would have soon ended. Governor King would, doubtless, have issued an act of amnesty to all who should cease from their opposition to the existing government. This would unquestionably have been followed by a convention, and a new constitution by which Dorr and his friends would have gained substantially what they had been contending for. How unfortunate that affairs took a different turn. But who was now at fault. What so effectually prevented this peaceful and successful solution of the problem. Here we are required to relate a singular tale, a sad story. We must arraign the rotten politics of the city of New York, as the responsible cause of the unfortunate chapter which now followed in the history of Rhode Island.

TAMMANY HALL RESPONSIBLE.

We are compelled to lay the charge at the door of *Tammany Hall*, New York.

To Governor Dorr it was made clear in Washington that he could receive no aid from the national government, but that the President, while anxious to avoid civil strife, would use his influence in favor of the *de facto* government, and that if the United States troops should be used in the Rhode Island troubles, they would assist that government not the revolutionists. While there Governor Dorr held interviews with President Tyler, Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, and other leaders of both political parties, and everywhere he failed to obtain sympathy for himself or his

party sufficient to encourage him to proceed further in the attempt to establish his government. He saw clearly that he could not cope with his enemies in Rhode Island if they were to be aided by the military forces of the United States.

Hence it was that on his arrival in New York he had determined, though reluctantly, to leave the existing government in peace and to trust to the good offices of President Tyler to effect a compromise and to obtain amnesty for himself and his followers.

How happy it would have been for Rhode Island and for Thomas W. Dorr, if he could have come straight through the City of New York to Rhode Island.

The people of Rhode Island, as a whole, even most of the leaders of the suffrage movement were in just the frame of mind to accept amnesty, for during all this time the strong sentiment of the state was against any appeal to arms.

DORR, THE GUEST OF TAMMANY.

But on Dorr's arrival in New York he was cordially received by the leaders of Tammany Hall. Following the lead of Hon. E. F. Purdy, ex-president of the New York Board of Aldermen, one of the leaders of Tammany, he was invited to accept their escort and with his friend Dutée J. Pearce attended that Friday evening the Bowery Theatre. This was duly chronicled in the daily papers and was the beginning of the attentions showered upon this distinguished Rhode Island *People's Governor*. Saturday forenoon came a reception to the Governor and to Welcome B. Sayles, the Speaker of the People's General Assembly. Several hours were spent in this distinguished ovation, and when the time came for the Governor to depart for Providence he found a great crowd collected on the Park. At once a procession was formed as an escort, under the leadership of William H. Cornell. It was reported that fully five hundred people in citizen's dress, together with a band of music and a company

of volunteer firemen formed this escort. Governor Dorr, Speaker Sayles, Ex-Alderman Purdy and Editor Slamm occupied the barouche.

Before leaving the city Governor Dorr received the following communication :

NEW YORK, May 13, 1842.

"To Thomas W. Dorr, Governor of the State of Rhode Island :

SIR:—Several military companies of this city and vicinity having tendered their services to form a military escort to accompany you to Providence, we have the honor to apprise your excellency of the fact. This distinction which they so much admire, we hope will meet with your cheerful acceptance.

With sentiments of the highest respect,

We are very respectfully yours,

ALEXANDER WING, JR.,

Col. 13th Reg't N. Y. A.

ABRAHAM J. CRASTO,

Lt. Col. 236th Reg't N. Y. S. I.

To this communication Governor Dorr made the following reply :

NEW YORK, May 14th, 1842.

"To Cols. Wing and Crasto :

GENTLEMEN:—I return to you my most sincere thanks for the offer contained in your letter of yesterday of an escort of several military companies to accompany me to the City of Providence. It is impossible to mistake the spirit in which this offer is made. It is an indication of the fraternal interest with which you regard the present struggle for their just right of the people of Rhode Island, whom I have the honor to represent.

While I should not feel justified at the present moment in withdrawing you from your homes and business on the expedition

contemplated, allow me to say that the time may not be distant when I may be obliged to call upon you for your services in that cause to which you will so promptly render the most efficient aid—The cause of American citizens contending for their sovereign right to make and maintain a republican constitution and opposed by the hired soldiers of the General Government.

In this unequal contest I invoke your aid and that of your associates in arms. We appeal from the Government to the people, and rely upon them in the last resort to defend our rights from every arbitrary aggression.

Be pleased to make my cordial acknowledgements to officers and privates, who have kindly united with you in the honor which has been proffered me, and accept the regards of your friend and fellow-citizen.

THOMAS W. DORR."

This letter of Dorr plainly tells us that he had changed his mind, that now he had determined to continue the contest, and, not only so, but that he had decided to employ military force.

He speaks of being opposed by "*the hired soldiers* of the General Government." That means the regular Army of the United States. He "appeals from the *Government* to the *people*." That implies that he intends to employ military force as against not only the State of Rhode Island, but even against the power of the United States.

DORR DETERMINES TO USE FORCE.

What a change has come over the man! Before he reached New York from Washington he saw that he could do no more. He supposed that he must allow the existing government to go on, and trust to President Tyler's influence to secure general amnesty.

Now, however, he at once writes a letter to the governor of Connecticut and another to the governor of Maine, "requesting

them to call the attention of their legislatures to the situation in Rhode Island." He complains that Rhode Island is "threatened with a military intervention unless they abandon their constitution and surrender all their rights."

It is now the middle of May. The People's government had practically ceased to exist. The legislature had organized held a session of a day and adjourned. The members had gone to their homes. The executive officers had not taken possession of any of the bureaus, papers or documents of the state, and had not attempted to perform any executive functions.

DORR RETURNS TO PROVIDENCE.

The new government had failed to create a judiciary. Thus all three departments of the proposed new government were totally inoperative. Dorr's adherents were daily falling away and deserting his standard.

On the 16th of May, Dorr, elated by the empty promises of Tammany, his head completely turned by the flattery of the Democracy of New York City, appeared in Providence. A large company greeted him on his arrival and escorted him to the residence of Burrington Anthony, where the Governor proposed to establish his headquarters.

Dorr now asserted that he had been promised the aid of 5,000 men and that he could have them at any time. And—poor, deluded mortal! he believed it too. He was sure of assistance enough from New York to overcome any force the United States might use against him and his party in Rhode Island.

In an address that he published in *The Express*, the Suffrage organ, he said: "It has become my duty to say, that so soon as a soldier of the United States shall be set in motion, by whatever direction, to act against the people of this state, in aid of the Charter government, I shall call for that aid [from New York] to oppose

such force, which I am fully authorized to say, will be immediately and most cheerfully tendered to the service of the people of Rhode Island from the City of New York and from other places. The contest will then become national and our state the battle-ground of American Freedom."

Meantime his friends in New York kept up the agitation. A call for a meeting in the Park in front of City Hall was signed by such men as Stephen Allen, John I. Morgan, Walter Bowne, A. Vanderpoel, William C. Bryant, Samuel J. Tilden, Elijah F. Purdy, Alexander Stewart and Levi D. Slamm.

Surely Governor Dorr had some respectable names among his supporters in New York. Different newspapers reported the number present at this out-door meeting from 3,000 to 12,000.

ATTACK ON THE ARSENAL.

Events hastened. In the early morning of May 18th Governor Dorr made the famous attack upon the arsenal upon the borders of the Dexter Training Ground.

He had taken no pains to organize a proper force from the militia and this bold attack upon the state arsenal was made by a small mob of persons not drilled in military tactics, and without competent officers. It was in the midst of a dense fog. The arsenal was well manned by troops, both infantry and artillery. This defence was wholly by state troops, no Federal troops being nearer than at Fort Adams, Newport.

The following brief account of this semi-engagement is taken *verbatim*, from an article published in The American Historical Review, January 1898:

"The attacking force failed to obtain a peaceful surrender, and Governor Dorr ordered that one of his cannons should be fired. The audacity of this order can scarcely be conceived. In a dense fog, with less than two hundred men, with almost no ammunition

for their two cannon, the order is given to fire upon a building built of stone, stocked with powder and balls, and fully guarded. If a gun has been fired, the cannons in the arsenal might have mown down the unprotected attacking force. But the guns did not go off. They were flashed twice but without result. The attack was a failure." No blood was shed, but the little band was compelled to withdraw from the field. Governor Dorr would have fired upon the arsenal, had he been able. If he had succeeded, he would very possibly have fallen at the first return fire. In any case, doubtless, the sound of the first gun, on that foggy night, would have caused blind attack and counter attack, and great loss of life might easily have followed. The New York friends of the People's Governor are not responsible for the failure to begin a real civil war in Rhode Island.

Dorr was thoroughly beaten. His friends had deserted him. He had shown that he was no military man. He was not an inspiring leader. Moreover, he did not know when he was beaten. He still counted on pledged support to the extent of 1,300 men. We shall soon see how terribly disappointed he must have been in the result of his next attempt.

Many members of the People's Government resigned. For thirty days, or about that, there were no wars, but only "rumors of wars."

A SECOND VISIT TO NEW YORK.

Governor Dorr again visited New York. There he received much sympathy though little material assistance. He left New York on Tuesday, June 21st to return to Rhode Island. The next morning he arrived in Norwich, Connecticut, on the steamboat *New Haven*. With him was the "Spartan Band," a small number of men, not more than twenty, under the command of "Mike Walsh."

Dorr at once sent an order to convene a council of military officers at Chepachet, to determine whether any step should be taken at this time or not.

MILITARY CAMP AT CHEPACHET.

He hastened to Chepachet. A few were already there. Shortly men began to appear. Day after day the number increased. It certainly was a motley crew. Scarcely two hundred men, all told, were enrolled, thus forming Dorr's Army. A few slight breast-works were thrown up on Acote's Hill.

This whole movement was—although threatening to prove a tragedy—merely a laughable farce.

The *de facto* government was seriously frightened. Surely there were *rumors* of wars. It was currently reported in Providence that Dorr was at the head of an army of 2,000 disciplined men, well armed, and that this army was on the march to Providence, to demand its surrender; if refused they would bombard the city.

The fright of the Charter Government was only exceeded by the fear of the Dorrites on Acote's Hill.

"A BODY OF MEN" ARRESTED.

Let me quote the following incident: "The report came late in the evening of Wednesday, June 22nd, that a body of men had been seen approaching the village along the turnpike. Guards were posted at the entrance to the village, and one or two hours after midnight the entire hostile force, consisting of four men, were arrested and lodged in a barn. Two were travelling from Providence to Killingly, Conn., and the other two had been sent out by the Executive Council to see what movements were being made at Chepachet. The four men were bound together, and between the files of a company of soldiers, were compelled at once to walk the twelve miles to Woonsocket. Throughout the march they were

harshly treated, and one became so exhausted that he had to be carried. Reaching Woonsocket at six in the morning the four men were taken to a hill which seemed to be the headquarters of the so-called Suffragists. After a couple of hours delay, the men were permitted to go, no reason being found for holding them."

May I be permitted, just at this place, to give my own testimony of what I saw and had knowledge of at the time.

THE STORY OF GENERAL DE WOLFE.

One of my neighbors, living near the Rhode Island line, but in the town of Uxbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, was Capt. Henry De Wolfe. He had served as a captain of the Militia in that town. He early espoused the cause of Governor Dorr, was with him in his disastrous attack upon the Arsenal in Providence, May 17, and was in command at Atwells Avenue later. He joined Dorr at Chepachet and it was reported that the Governor made him his ranking General. After a few days on duty there he left the camp to visit his home to get a supply of clean linen. On arriving at his father's house, he learned that Governor King had sent a requisition to Governor Davis of Massachusetts for his arrest.

The doughty general was not safe anywhere. He was as liable to arrest in the Bay State as he was in the Providence Plantations. He was frightened. He knew not what to do. In this dilemma he came up to the house of my grandfather, a sturdy Quaker, then sixty-four years old, and laid the case before him, asking for his advice as to what he had better do. "Do, Henry," said "Uncle Gideon" (as he was generally called) "do, Henry, I'll tell thee what to do. Thee go home and write a letter to Governor Davis and tell him that if he will let thee alone thee'l stay at home and behave thyself." "I'll do it," said Henry.

So, General Henry De Wolfe went home and wrote an abject letter to Governor Davis, saying that he had been deceived, and that

he was sorry that he had got embroiled in the unpleasant affairs of Rhode Island, and that if he was not molested, he would stay at home and demean himself properly.

This letter he brought over and read to "Uncle Gideon," and asked his opinion of it.

"That is all right, Henry. Thee send it along by mail and my word for it the Governor will not trouble thee."

So it was sent and Davis at once answered assuring De Wolfe that if he stayed away from Rhode Island he would not be molested.

But, now, what should the quasi-general do. He must busy himself in some way. One neighbor, Mr. Morse, lived between us and De Wolfe. He was busy with several hired men in hoeing a large field of corn. He hired De Wolfe to help him in hoeing the corn. He also engaged me as a boy to ride the horse in plowing between the rows of corn. So, it happened that the next day General De Wolfe, Dorr's first general, and I were working all day in the same field.

Afterwards I heard Mr. Morse say that during the day De Wolfe in his conversation favored the "Algerines," as the "Law and Order" government was called, and was opposed to the "Dorrites." Mr. Morse said that at one time in the afternoon De Wolfe proposed to Morse that they they should both go over to Harrisville and join the "Algerine" forces.

"You fool," said Morse. "You've just got out of one bad scrape, and now you propose to jump into another. You may find it to be jumping out of the frying pan into the fire."

But something quite as astounding happened that night, for the next day the men brought the General's hoe to the field, but he, himself, did not appear. Mr. Morse gave this account of it. He said that during the night there was a tremendous pounding on his outer door, which waked him from a sound sleep.

"Who's there?" inquired Morse.

"This is Captain Brown of Ironstone" (a small village not far away).

Now Captain Brown was a staunch Dorrite.

"What do you want?"

"Is General De Wolfe here?"

"Yes, he's here. Who wants him?"

"I would like to see him a few minutes."

"Very well. I'll call him."

So Morse awoke De Wolfe and sent him out to see Captain Brown. After a while he came in, awakened Mr. Morse, and asked him if he would lend him a clean collar and shirt-bosom. He said he was going away for a little time. Morse told him where he would find the articles, and went to sleep again. But De Wolfe did not return, and before night the next day we laborers in the cornfield learned that he returned to Chepachet (only some seven or eight miles away), and that Governor Dorr had reinstated him as General of his forces.

DORR DISBANDS HIS ARMY.

On Monday, June 27th, about 7 o'clock in the evening, Walter S. Burges received a letter from Chepachet, enclosing one addressed to the publishers of the "Express," the Dorrite paper, which read as follows:

"Gloucester, R. I., June 27, 1842.

"To the Publishers of the 'Express,' Providence, R. I.

"Having received such information as induces me to believe that a majority of the friends of the People's Constitution disapprove of any further forcible measures for its support; and believing that a conflict of arms would, therefore, under existing circumstances, be but a personal controversy among different portions of our citizens, I hereby direct that the military here assembled be dismissed by their respective officers.

"T. W. DORR,

"Commander-in-Chief."

Governor Dorr and his friends went at once to Connecticut.* The State line was only about eight or nine miles from Chepachet. A small company of men from New York, perhaps twenty, under command of "Mike" Walsh, went with him. Dorr soon after went to New Hampshire, where he remained for more than a year. Governor Cleaveland of Connecticut and Governor Hubbard of New Hampshire refused to honor the requisition from Governor King for his arrest.

Now, while the "People's Governor" stays away from Rhode Island, let us consider his course of action in those troublous times. We have already seen that he was a strong man, with decided principles, public spirited, and true to his convictions of right. He did not disband his forces because he was afraid that his army was not strong enough to cope with the State troops being brought against him. He was always truly democratic. He disbanded his forces at Chepachet because, as he himself said, he had "received such information as induced [him] to believe that a majority of the friends of the People's Constitution disapproved of any further forcible measures for its support."

*He went directly to the house of Andrew Horton, in Thompson. Mr. Horton secreted him in his house, until he left Connecticut and went to New Hampshire. A pocket-book is now in the possession of Andrew Horton of Woonsocket, R. I., son of that Andrew Horton of Woonsocket which was presented to the senior Horton by Aaron White, one of the "nine lawyers" who figured conspicuously in the suffrage movement. In this pocket-book is the following inscription in the handwriting of Mr. White, the donor.

"This Pocket Book is presented by Aaron White, Jr., of Cumberland, R. I., to Andrew Horton, of Thompson, Ct., to be kept by said Andrew as a certificate that on the 30th day of June, 1842, said Andrew nobly preferred the recollection of having done a good deed to the possession of a Reward of Five Thousand Dollars which was offered and might have been obtained by him had he chosen to accept it."

The "good deed" mentioned refers to the fact that the sum of \$5,000 had been offered by Governor King for the arrest of Governor Dorr. This account was given to me by Darius D. Farnum, Esq., of Woonsocket. He copied the certificate from the pocket-book.

DORR'S MISTAKES.

Dorr was honest and conscientious. He was no time-server. But he made most egregious blunders.

1. He was not enough of a politician to get possession of the State archives on the 3d and 4th of May. That was a fatal mistake. But it was the mistake of his co-workers, advisers and followers, rather than his own.

2. It was his misfortune rather than his fault that he did not have strong advisers and co-workers.

3. He had no military ability whatever. The attack on the Arsenal was criminally stupid, and his attempt to organize an army at Chepachet to contend with the State forces, then being gathered against him, was too silly to be conceived by any sane mind.

4. It was another fatal blunder, when he lost his head through the flattery of the Tammanyites of New York.

It seems incredible that a pure, unselfish man, honest and conscientious, a real statesman, should make such a series of outrageous blunders. But such is the fact. Let us not, however, fail to judge him fairly. Let us not perpetuate the prejudices which most Rhode Islanders have cherished for more than three score years, and think that he was without honesty, or without ability.

HIS TRIAL, CONVICTION AND IMPRISONMENT.

We will now very briefly look at his trial, conviction of treason, life in the State Prison, pardon, rights restored, justification by the majority of the Rhode Island Legislature, and his untimely death.

Dorr's life struggle had failed. His government had reached an ignominious end. The People's Constitution had been ignored, but a new Constitution had been adopted, under which the laws of

Rhode Island were administered, and this new Constitution gave the people substantially the rights for which Dorr had so faithfully and persistently labored. Dorr was an outlaw, charged with treason, and a reward of *Five Thousand Dollars* offered for his capture.

Under these circumstances, knowing that he would at once be arrested, and tried before the Supreme Court of the State, the Judges being already pronounced enemies to him and opposed to his entire course, knowing also that the people of Rhode Island were mainly prejudiced against him—it certainly required a high degree of courage to return voluntarily to his native State and place himself in the hands of his enemies.

But he was honest in his conviction that his cause had been right, and, as he had himself said: "Rights and duties are not taken away by a failure of arms, nor are they measured by degrees of success or failure." He wished to have the question settled, whether he was a felon or a patriot. He had faith in his cause, and believed he would be exonerated.

Therefore, he returned voluntarily to Rhode Island, and after full consultation with his friends, on the last day of October, 1843, he quietly walked into the City Hotel in Providence, and was quickly arrested and taken to jail. There he remained until the last day of February, 1844, when he was taken before the Supreme Court, then sitting at Newport. His trial was set for April 26th, 1844, the Judges being Chief Justice Job Durfee and Associate Justices Levi Haile, William R. Staples, and George A. Brayton.

Mr. Dorr conducted his own case, assisted by George Turner of Newport and Walter S. Burges of Providence.

"There was no attempt on the part of the defence to deny any of the facts; it merely sought to show justification." The jury rendered a verdict of guilty, at 2 o'clock on the morning of May 7th.

HIS SENTENCE.

Mr. Dorr was sentenced by Chief Justice Durfee, June 20th. The sentence was for treason against the State of Rhode Island, and was in these words:

...

"That the said Thomas Wilson Dorr be imprisoned in the State Prison at Providence, for the term of his natural life, and there kept at hard labor in separate confinement."

The closing words of Mr. Dorr in his address to the Court, when asked why sentence should not be pronounced upon him, were these:

"I am bound, in duty to myself, to express to you my deep and solemn conviction that I have not received at your hands the fair trial by an impartial jury to which by law and justice I was entitled."

On the 22nd of June, 1844, Thomas Wilson Dorr was taken to Providence and placed in the State Prison for life.

But he was right when he told the judges that he had not received at their hands a fair trial.

HIS TRIAL NOT A FAIR ONE.

I will not carry you through the tedious labyrinths of that long trial. I will, in the briefest language, tell you why I think Governor Dorr did not have a fair trial.

1. The judges were all prejudiced, utterly disqualified, before the trial began.

2. The jury, to a man, were disqualified. They were, every man of them, Algerines and Whigs. Out of the entire panel of 118 men, *only three* belonged to the Democratic party, which at that time was practically the Dorrite party.

3. Dorr's offense was committed in Providence county, but the powers would not allow the trial to be held in that county. They felt that it were safer for them in Newport county.

4. Dorr claimed that what he did was done as Governor of the State, but the Court would allow no proof to be produced that he was Governor. Chief Justice Durfee settled the matter for the jury in few words. His dictum was this: "If the prisoner was Governor of the State, the evidence of it is a certificate of record from the proper officer."

Dorr had failed to establish his People's Constitution, had failed to secure the archives of the State, failed to get into his hands the reins of government. He had been arrested and tried for treason, and he must be convicted and sent to prison. He was convicted, and he was sent to State's Prison for life.

I am not defending Dorr's course. I am not saying the he ought not to have been convicted of treason against the State. What I do say is merely this: That he did not have a fair and impartial trial. That trial was the merest *farce*.

A STRIKING REACTION.

The natural reaction set in. Governor Dorr's parents, an aged couple, petitioned the General Assembly to pardon their son. That body, in January, 1845, their first meeting after his conviction, passed a vote that "the prayer be so far granted that Thomas W. Dorr be liberated from his confinement in the State Prison upon his taking the following oath or affirmation.

"I do solemnly swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations; and that I will support the Constitution and laws of this State and of the United States: So help me God."

With Dorr's views, it would have been inconsistent to accept pardon on any such terms. He declined to take the oath and remained in prison. Here he was consistent.

HIS PARDON BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

But, on the 27th day of June, 1845, the General Assembly passed an act "to pardon certain offences against the sovereign power of this State, and to quiet the minds of the good people thereof." This act provided for the discharge from prison of "any person who has been convicted of the crime of treason against the State and is now in prison under sentence of the law."

This was just a year from the time the prison doors had closed upon Governor Dorr. He had been a prisoner six months before his sentence. A full year and a half, therefore, had he suffered imprisonment, as he had consistently contended, for his best efforts to secure for the majority of the men of Rhode Island what he believed to be their just rights. He had failed to uphold the People's Constitution, but a new Constitution had been adopted, by which the people secured those rights.

Six years later, in May, 1851, a resolution, passed by the General Assembly, restored to Mr. Dorr his civil and political rights.

SENTENCE REVERSED AND ANNULLED.

Tardy justice was not done yet, in the opinion of many. In 1853 a strong Democratic wave swept the State, and in 1854, with a Democratic majority in both House and Senate and a Democratic Governor, elected by a majority of more than 2,000 votes, in February the General Assembly passed an act reversing and annulling the judgment of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island rendered against Thomas W. Dorr.

This act criticised some of the features of the trial of Dorr, affirmed that he had been wrongfully convicted and that these wrongs should be redressed.

Mr. Arthur May Mowry, in his book, "The Constitutional Struggle in Rhode Island," a work which I have freely used in the preparation of this paper, says:

"Since the English forefathers had been in the habit of reversing judgments by acts of Parliament, and since the Charter granted to the General Assembly the right 'to alter, revoke, annul or pardon such fines, mulcts, imprisonments, sentences, judgments and condemnations as shall be thought fit,' and since the new Constitution continued to the General Assembly the powers heretofore exercised, therefore, it decreed that the judgment against Thomas Wilson

Dorr, 'Hereby repealed, reversed, annulled, and declared to be as if it had never been rendered.' The clerk of the Supreme Court for the County of Newport was ordered to 'write across the face of the record of said judgment the words, "Reversed and Annulled by Order of the General Assembly, at their January Session, A. D. 1854." ' "

But, could any act of the General Assembly redress the injury which had been done to Governor Dorr? At less than fifty years of age he was a brokendown man. I saw him but once. It was in the Autumn of 1854. In the afternoon of a beautiful day he had taken a ride, and I saw him as he stepped out of the carriage and walked off to his home. He was then weak and infirm. He died the 27th of December, 1854—just past the age of 49 years.

The story told in this paper is unique. No other State in our Union, or perhaps elsewhere, has ever had any such experience as this was for Rhode Island. Each party was stubborn. Families were divided. Feeling ran high. Animosity was rampant. Prejudice controlled almost everything. The most bitter feelings prevailed.

ANECDOTE OF FATHER WILLIAMS AND GENERAL CARPENTER.

A single incident will illustrate this:

Rev. Thomas Williams, D. D., was an eccentric preacher. He was a man of great ability and power, and much respected by everybody. Thomas F. Carpenter was one of the leading Suffragists. Under the People's Constitution he was first nominated for Governor. He refused to accept, and thus Dorr became the nominee and was elected. Carpenter was prominent all through the troubles—one of the most eminent "Dorrites." He was a great admirer of "Father Williams." Meeting him one day, after the Dorr struggle was all over, Mr. Carpenter greeted Williams very cordially, inquired for his health, and said: "How I should like to hear you preach once more."

"If you had been where you ought to be, you might have heard me preach last Sabbath," was the reply.

"Where did you hold forth last Sabbath, Father Williams?"

"In the State Prison," was the reply.

DORR'S FAMOUS PROPHECIES.

While Governor Dorr was broken in health, a physical wreck, yet to the last his head was clear and his brain active. The following incident illustrates his power of thought:

During the Autumn of 1853, after the beginning of the troubles between Russia and Turkey, which brought on the Crimean War, so-called, Mr. Dorr wrote a series of articles upon that controversy, which were published in the Providence Herald. In the closing article of the series he ventured to speak of the probabilities for the future. In this article occur the following passages:

"Poorly as the world must think of such a mode of acquisition on the part of England, still the people of Turkey and the East would be gainers by the act. English civilization is the only civilization which has proved itself capable, in modern times, of rearing great and permanent free states. This civilization, with industry and commerce in its train, would revive the finest portion of the earth, now almost a wilderness of ruin, and bring back those days of prosperity which the records of history tell of, but which, in contrast with present appearances, seem almost fabulous. If Constantinople were possessed by England, a new and large Continental England would arise, surpassing the former in all the elements of greatness."

"The world is now rapidly tending to the aggregation or consolidation of nations into a few great empire states. England and Russia already excel the Roman Empire. France is aiming at further annexations of territory. Germany will be, before many years, united in a confederation. Asia, west of the British dominions,

will fall into the hands of Russia or England. China and Japan will be Anglicised or Americanized. The United States will take in the whole continent of America. The Australian Island will become a Federal Republic.

"Africa will exhibit a line of French provinces on the north, a Liberian Republic in the West, an Egypto-British State in the north and east, and another Republic in the South.

"That under this new arrangement and vast aggregation of powers, the battles of freedom will be fought over again, Russia marshalling the East against the West, we are not permitted to doubt.

"Nor is it less certain that our own Republic, destined to become the greatest of all nations unless arrested by the suicidal dissolution of the Union, will give the casting vote, with a mailed hand, in favor of the freedom and progress of the race.

"The grand inference to be deduced, in every view of our position and duty, is then, that Americans ought to improve and hold fast their own institutions, elevate their national character, render this the abode of the highest intelligence and of a truly Christian civilization, as well as of the most successful industry; that thus our Republic may be in readiness, when called upon in the future to decide the fate of nations, to hold up for their imitation the example of a State whose institutions are more conducive to the greatest freedom and welfare of mankind than all the world has ever seen."

Are not these the words of a statesman? A man who could see into the future as he saw, could interpret the signs of the times more than half a century ago, as he foresaw and interpreted—surely such a man was an independent thinker, endowed with a high order of intellect.

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